(19) 日本国特許庁(JP)

# (12)公開特許公報(A)

(11)特許出顧公開番号

特開2004-61136 (P2004-61136A)

(43) 公開日 平成16年2月26日(2004.2.26)

(51) Int.C1.7 GO1N 35/04

FΙ

GO1N 35/04

テーマコード(参考) Н

2G058

GO1N 35/02

GO1N 35/02 C

> 審査請求 未請求 請求項の数 16 OL (全 26 頁)

(21) 出願番号 (22) 出願日

特願2002-215898 (P2002-215898) 平成14年7月24日 (2002.7.24)

(71) 出願人 390029791

アロカ株式会社

東京都三鷹市牟礼6丁目22番1号

(74) 代理人 100091627

弁理士 朝比 一夫

(74) 代理人 100091292

弁理士 増田 達哉

(72) 発明者 井田 泰道

東京都三鷹市牟礼6丁目22番1号 アロ

力株式会社内

(72) 発明者 庭山 宏明

東京都三鷹市牟礼6丁目22番1号 アロ

力株式会社内

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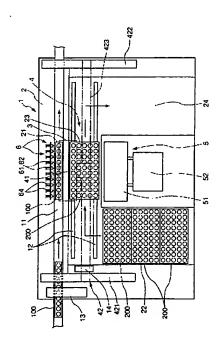
#### (54) 【発明の名称】検体移載装置

#### (57)【要約】

【課題】検体を収納した容器をラックがらラックへ効率 良く円滑に移し換えることができる検体移載装置を提供 すること。

【解決手段】検体移載装置1は、第1ラック100に保 持された検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を第2ラック 200へ移し換える装置であり、装置本体2と、複数本 の容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構3と、把持機構3を 移動させる移動手段4と、第2ラック200中の、移し 換えを行う列の隣の列に保持された容器の姿勢を規制す る規制手段と、第1ラック100を搬送する第1ラック 搬送機構11と、第2ラック200を搬送する第2ラッ ク機送機構12と、容器に付されたパーコードラベルが 担持する情報を読み取る容器用パーコードリーダ13と 、第2ラック200に付されたパーコードラベルが担持 する情報を読み取る第2ラック用パーコードリーダ14 と、容器に対し投光・受光する反射センサ6とを備えて 117.

【選択図】図1



#### 【特許請求の範囲】

#### 【請求項1】

検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器を複数本保持する第1ラックと、前記容器 を複数本保持する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、

複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向に移動する移動手段と、

前記把持機構および前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする 検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項2】

検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器を複数本1列に並べて保持する第1ラックと、前記容器をn 行×m列(ただし、n、mは、それぞれ2以上の整数)に保持する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、

複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向に移動する移動手段と、

前記把持機構および前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする 検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項3】

検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器の本(ただし、のは2以上の整数)を1列に並べて保持する第1ラックと、前記容器をの行×m列(ただし、mは2以上の整数)に保持する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、

複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向を含む2次元方向に移動する移動手段と、前記把持機構あよび前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項4】

当該検体移載装置は、前記容器を前記第1ラックから前記第2ラックへ移し換えるものである請求項1ないし8のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項5】

前記容器には、当該容器に収納された検体に対応する情報を持つ第1情報担体が付されており、前記第2のラックには、当該第2のラックを特定する情報を持つ第2情報担体が付されている請求項4に記載の検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項6】

前記第1精報担体は、パーコードが付されたラペルである請求項5に記載の検体移載装置

#### 【請求項7】

前記第 2 精報担体は、パーコードが付されたラベルである請求項 5 または 6 に記載の検体 移載装置。

#### 【請求項8】

前記第1精報担体が担持する精報を読み取る第1読み取り装置を有する請求項5ないし7のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項9】

前記第2橋報担体が担持する橋報を読み取る第2読み取り装置を有する請求項5ないし8のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

#### 【請求項10】

前記第1橋報担体が担持する橋報を読み取る第1読み取り装置と、

前記第2精報担体が担持する情報を読み取る第2読み取り装置と、

前記第1読み取り装置および前記第2読み取り装置により読み取られた精報に基づいて、 前記第2のラックに保持された前記容器を特定し得る管理用精報を作成する精報作成手段

とを有する請求項5ないし7のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

### 【請求項11】

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前記管理用機報を記憶する記憶手段を有する請求項10に記載の検体移載装置。

【請求項12】

前記管理用橋報は、前記第2ラックを特定する橋報と、該第2ラックの前記容器が保持される各位置と該各位置に保持される前記容器とを対応させて該各容器を特定する橋報とを含む請求項10または11に記載の検体移載装置。

【請求項13】

前記各容器を特定する情報は、該各容器のID番号に関する情報を含む請求項12に記載の検体移載装置。

【請求項14】

前記第2ラックを特定する精報は、該第2ラックのID番号に関する精報を含む請求項5 10ないし13のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

【請求項15】

前記第1ラックを搬送する搬送機構を有する請求項1ないし14のいずれかに記載の検体 移載装置。

【請求項16】

前記第2ラックを機送する機送機構を有する請求項1ないし15のいずれかに記載の検体 移載装置。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】

本発明は、 ラックに保持された検体を収納する容器を他のラックへ移し換える検体移載装置に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】

従来、検体(試料)を自動で分注する分注装置や検体を自動で分析する検体分析装置などにおいては、各検体は、試験管のようなチュープ状の容器に収容され、この容器は、複数本の単位でこれらを1列に保持する小さいラックに保持され、ラック毎機送される。

[0003]

また、検体を保存する際などには、多数の容器を行列状に保持する大きいラックが用いられる。

[0004]

このため、例えば、検体分析装置で分析するための子検体を分注装置で分注し終えた残りの親検体を保存する際などには、容器を小さいラックから大きいラックへ移し換えることが行われる。

[0005]

しかしながら、従来、検体を収納した容器をラックからラックへ自動で移し換える装置は無かった。このため、容器をラックからラックへ移し換えるのは、人手に頼っているので、病院や検査センターで多数の検体を処理する場合、多大な手間と時間を要するという問題があった。

[0006]

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【発明が解決しようとする課題】

本発明の目的は、検体を収納した容器をラックからラックへ効率良く円滑に移し換えることができる検体移載装置を提供することにある。

[0007]

【課題を解決するための手段】

このような目的は、下記(1)~(16)の本発明により達成される。

[0008]

(1) 検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器を複数本保持する第1ラックと、前記容器を複数本保持する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、 複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向に移動する移動手段と、

前記把持機構および前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする 検体移載装置。

[0009]

(2) 検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器を複数本1列に並べて保持する第 1ラックと、前記容器をn行Xm列(ただし、n、mは、それぞれ2以上の整数)に保持 する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、

複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向に移動する移動手段と、

前記把持機構および前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする 検体移載装置。

[0010]

(3) 検体を収納するチュープ状の容器を、前記容器の本(ただし、nは2以上の整数 )を1列に並べて保持する第1ラックと、前記容器をn行Xm列(ただし、mは2以上の 整数)に保持する第2ラックとの間で移し換える検体移載装置であって、

複数本の前記容器を同時に把持し得る把持機構と、

前記把持機構を少なくとも前記容器の長手方向を含む2次元方向に移動する移動手段と、 前記把持機構および前記移動手段の作動を制御する制御手段とを備えることを特徴とする 検体移載装置。

[0011]

(4) 当該検体移載装置は、前記容器を前記第1ラックから前記第2ラックへ移し換え るものである上記(1)ないし(3)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0012]

前記容器には、当該容器に収納された検体に対応する情報を持つ第1情報担体が 付されており、前記第2のラックには、当該第2のラックを特定する情報を持つ第2情報 担体が付されている上記(4)に記載の検体移載装置。

[0013]

(6) 前記第1精報担体は、パーコードが付されたラペルである上記(5)に記載の検 体移截装置。

[0014]

前記第2精報担体は、パーコードが付されたラベルである上記(5)または(6 )に記載の検体移載装置。

[0015]

( 8 ) 前 記 第 1 精 報 担 体 が 担 持 す る 精 報 を 読 み 取 3 第 1 読 み 取 り 装 置 を 有 す る 上 記 ( 5 )ないし(7)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0016]

前記第2精報担体が担持する精報を読み取る第2読み取り装置を有する上記(5 )ないし(8)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0017]

(10) 前記第1情報担体が担持する情報を読み取る第1読み取り装置と、

前記 第 2 精 報 担 体 が 担 持 す る 精 報 を 読 み 取 る 第 2 読 み 取 リ 装 置 と 、

前記第1読み取り装置および前記第2読み取り装置により読み取られた橋報に基づりて、 前記 第 2 の ラ ッ ク に 保 持 さ れ 友 前 記 容 器 を 特 定 し 得 る 管 理 用 棈 報 を 作 成 す る 情 報 作 成 手 段 とを有する上記(5)ないし(7)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0018]

( 11) 前記管理用機報を記憶する記憶手段を有する上記(10)に記載の検体移載装 置。

[0019]

(12) 前記管理用橋報は、前記第2ラックを特定する橋報と、該第2ラックの前記容 器が保持される各位置と該各位置に保持される前記容器とを対応させて該各容器を特定す

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る精報とを含む上記(10)または(11)に記載の検体移載装置。

[0020]

(13) 前記各容器を特定する構報は、該各容器のID番号に関する構報を含む上記( 12)に記載の検体移載装置。

[0021]

(14) 前記第2ラックを特定する情報は、該第2ラックのID番号に関する情報を含む上記(5)ないし(18)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0022]

(15) 前記第1ラックを搬送する搬送機構を有する上記(1)ないし(14)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0023]

(16) 前記第2ラックを搬送する搬送機構を有する上記(1)ないし(15)のいずれかに記載の検体移載装置。

[0024]

【発明の実施の形態】

以下、本発明の検体移載装置を添付図面に示す好適な実施形態に基づいて詳細に説明する

[0025]

図1は、本発明の検体移載装置の実施形態を示す平面図、図2は、図1に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す斜視図、図3ないし図5は、それぞれ、図1に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す断面平面図、図6は、図1に示す検体移載装置におけるガイド部材および第2ラックを示す斜視図、図7ないし図14は、それぞれ、図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図、図15は、図1に示す検体移載装置の概略的なプロック図である。

[0026]

図1に示す検体移載装置1は、第1ラック100に保持された検体を収納するチュープ状の容器300を第2ラック200へ移し換える装置であり、装置本体2と、複数本の容器300を同時に把持し得る把持機構3と、把持機構3を移動させる移動手段4と、第2ラック200中の、移し換えを行う列の隣の列に保持された容器300の姿勢を規制する規制手段5と、第1ラック100を搬送する第1ラック機送機構11と、第2ラック200を搬送する第1ラック機送機構11と、第2ラック200を搬送する第1ラック機送機構11と、第2ラック200を搬送する第300に付されたパーコードラベル(第1積報4本)301が担持する情報を読み取る第2ラック用パーコードリーダ(第2読み取り装置)14と、容器300に対し投光・受光する反射センサ6とを備えている。

[0027]

容器300は、上下方向に長いチュープ状(有底筒状)をなす、試験管のような容器である。この容器300には、検体(例えば血液、血液成分等の体液)が収納(収容)されている。図示の構成では、容器300は、その上端開口部の外周に、全周に渡り突出形成されたフランジ302を有している(図2参照)。また、容器300は、その長さが異なる複数種のものがある(図14参照)。

[0028]

図6に示すように、容器300の外周面には、収納されている検体に関する(対応する) 精報(例えば検体ID番号、患者ID番号、患者氏名、病院名、採血日時、容器ID番号 等)が担持されたパーコードが付されたパーコードラベル301が貼着されている。なお 、図6以外の図面中では、パーコードラベル301の図示を省略する。

[0029]

第1ラック100は、複数本(本実施形態では10本)の容器300を立てた状態(起立状態)で第1ラック100の長手方向に一列に並べて保持し得るように構成されている。 すなわち、第1ラック100には、容器300の下側の部分が挿入する凹部(穴)101 ガー列に並んで10個形成されている。

[0030]

第1 ラック100は、容器300の長さの違いにかかわらず収納した容器300の上端の高さがほぼ同じなるように、容器300の長さに合わせて凹部101の底の高さが調整されている。例えば、図11に示す長さが比較的短い容器300を収納する第1ラック100より凹部100は、図7に示す長さが比較的長い容器300を収納する第1ラック100には、同じ種類の(長さが等しい)複数の容器300を収納するものとされる。

[0031]

図6に示すように、第2ラック200は、複数本(本実施形態では50本)の容器300を立てた状態(起立状態)で行列状(本実施形態では10行×5列)に並べて保持し得るよう構成されている。すなわち、第2ラック200には、容器300の下側の部分が挿入する凹部(穴)203が10行×5列に並んで50個形成されている。この第2ラック200の列方向の凹部203の配列ピッチは、第1ラック100の凹部101の配列ピッチとも、第2ラック200に保持された容器300の配列ピッチと、第2ラック200に保持された容器300の列方向の配列ピッチとは、互いに等しくなる。

[0032]

第2ラック200の側面には、当該第2ラック200を特定する構報(例えばラックID 番号等)等が担持されたパーコードが付されたパーコードラベル201が貼着されている。なお、図6以外の図面中では、パーコードラベル201の図示を省略する。

[0033]

図1 に示すように、装置本体2 には、第1 ラック100 をその長手方向に搬送する第1 ラック搬送機構11 が設置されている。第1 ラック搬送機構11は、例えばペルト搬送機構 (ペルトコンペア)などで構成されている。

[0034]

第1ラック機送機構11の上流側(図1中左側)には、容器300を保持した第1ラック 100を複数貯留する第1ラック供給部(図示せず)が設けられており、容器300を保持した第1ラック100は、この第1ラック供給部より第1ラック機送機構11へ供給される。

[0035]

第1 ラック機送機構 1 1 へ供給された第1 ラック1 0 0 は、図1 中の右方向へ機送され、所定の停止位置 2 1 まで来ると、図示しないラックストッパ機構の作動により、一旦停止させられる。停止位置 2 1 では、後述する把持機構 8 および移動手段4 の作動により、当該第1 ラック1 0 0 が保持する容器 3 0 0 が第2 ラック 2 0 0 へ移し換えられる。移し換え後、空になった第1 ラック1 0 0 は、第1 ラック機送機構 1 1 の作動により、さらに図1 中の右方向へ搬送され、排出される。

[0036]

また、装置本体 2 には、第 2 ラック 2 0 0 を その長手方向に沿って 機送する 第 2 ラック機送機構 1 2 が 第 1 ラック機送機構 1 1 と並行(平行)するように設置されている。第 2 ラック機送機構 1 2 は、例えばペルト 機送機構(ペルトコンペア)などで構成されている。【0 0 3 7】

第2 ラック機送機構 1 2 の上液側(図 1 中の左側)には、空きの第2 ラック 2 0 0 を複数 貯留する第2 ラック供給部 2 2 が隣接して設けられている。第2 ラック供給部 2 2 に貯留 された第2 ラック 2 0 0 は、図示しない押し出し機構の作動により図 1 中の上方向に押し 出され、第2 ラック機送機構 1 2 の上流部へ順次供給される。第2 ラック供給部 2 2 にお ける第2 ラック 2 0 0 の進行方向は、第2 ラック搬送機構 1 2 の搬送方向に対しほぼ垂直 方向である。

[0038]

第2ラック機送機構12の上流部へ供給された空きの第2ラック200は、図1中右方向

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へ搬送され、所定の停止位置23まで来ると、図示しないラックストッパ機構の作動により、一旦停止させられる。第1ラック100が保持していた容器300は、停止位置23に停止した第2ラック200へ移し換えられる。

[0039]

この停止位置23は、第1ラック100の停止位置21に対応しており、停止位置23に停止した第2ラック200と、停止位置21に停止した第1ラック100とは、それらの機送方向についてほぼ同じ位置に位置する。

[0040]

移し換えが終わると、容器300を保持した第2ラック200は、第2ラック機送機構1 2の作動により、さらに図1中の右方向に搬送される。

[0041]

第2ラック機送機構12の下流側(図1中の右側)には、移し換えられた容器300を保持した第2ラック200を複数貯留する第2ラック排出部24が隣接して設けられている。第2ラック機送機構12の下流部へ搬送された第2ラック200は、図示しない押し出し機構の作動により図1中の下方向に押し出され、第2ラック排出部24へ排出される。第2ラック排出部24おける第2ラック200の進行方向は、第2ラック機送機構12の機送方向に対しほぼ垂直方向である。

[0042]

第1 ラック機送機構 1 1 の上流側には、容器 3 0 0 に付されたパーコードラベル 3 0 1 が 担持する情報を読み取る容器用パーコードリーダ 1 3 が設置されている。容器用パーコードリーダ 1 3 は、第 1 ラック機送機構 1 1 により搬送された第 1 ラック 1 0 0 が容器用パーコードリーダ 1 3 を通過する際に、当該第 1 ラック 1 0 0 に保持された各容器 3 0 0 のパーコードラベル 3 0 1 に対しせれぞれ読み取りを行う。

[0043]

第2 ラック機送機構 1 2 の上液側には、 第2 ラック 2 0 0 に付されたパーコード ラベル 2 0 1 が担持する情報を読み取る 第2 ラック用パーコードリーダ 1 4 が設置されている。 第2 ラック用パーコードリーダ 1 4 は、 第2 ラック 2 0 0 が 第2 ラック供給部 2 2 から 第2 ラック 被送機構 1 2 の上流部に供給された際、 当該第2 ラック 2 0 0 のパーコードラベル 2 0 1 に対し読み取りを行う。

[0044]

図5に示すように、本実施形態における把持機構(掴み機構)3は、1列に並んだ10本の容器300を同時に把持し得るものであり、容器300の外周面を押圧する押圧部材31と、この押圧部材31との間で容器300を挟持する平板状の板部材32と有する10箇所の部分が並設された構成になっている。把持機構3における各容器300に対応する10個所の部分は、互いに同様の構成であるので、以下ではそのうちの1箇所について代表して説明する。

[0045]

図2に示すように、押圧部材31は、容器300に対する接触部にほぼV字状の凹部(切欠き)311を有しており、この凹部311を構成する2つの平面が容器300の上端付近の外周面に接触(当接)する。把持機構3は、押圧部材31が凹部311を有することにより、容器300を遊び(がたつき)なく確実に把持することができ、特に、凹部311がほぼV字状をなすことにより、容器300の外径にかかわらず、容器300を遊び(がたつき)なく確実に把持することができる。

[0046]

10個の押圧部材31は、共に、1つの板状の支持部材38により支持されている。支持部材38は、板部材32とほぼ平行な姿勢で設置されている。各押圧部材31の凹部31と反対側には、2本の棒状のピン30が突出するように設けられており、このピン30が支持部材33に形成された貫通孔331に挿入することにより、支持部材33が各押圧部材31を支持している。各押圧部材31は、それぞれ、ピン30が貫通孔331内を摺動することにより、支持部材33に対し移動可能になっている。

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[0047]

押圧部材31と支持部材33との間には、押圧部材31を容器300に対する押圧方向に付勢するコイルパネ(付勢部材)34が設置されている。図示の構成では、コイルパネ34は、その内側にピン30が挿入した状態で設置されており、各押圧部材31に対し2つずつ設けられている。

[0048]

板部材32は、平板状の部材である。本実施形態では、板部材32は、容器300のフランジ302に対応する位置に、フランジ302が挿入し得る逃げ部(開口)321を有している。これにより、フランジ302を有する容器300を把持する場合であっても、フランジ302が邪魔にならず、板部材32が容器300の上端付近の外周面に確実に当接するので、把持機構3は、容器300を確実に把持することができる。

[0049]

板部材32は、把持機構3のフレーム35に固定されている。図示の構成では、10本の容器300に対する板部材32か一体的に形成されているが、板部材32は、複数に分割されていてもよい。

[0050]

なお、押圧部材31および板部材32の容器300に接触する部分は、滑り防止手段として、例えばゴム等の弾性材料の被覆が施されていてもよい。

[0051]

このような把持機構3では、容器300を挟持する押圧部材31および板部材32のうち、板部材32側においては、容器300からの張り出し幅がほぼ板部材32の板厚のみであり、極めて少ない。そして、検体移載装置1は、把持機構3で把持した容器300を第2ラック200に1列ずつ移し換えていく際に、板部材32側の列から順に容器300を発えていく(図13、図14参照)。これにより、第2ラックに保持された(既に移し換えた)隣の列の容器300との隙間400が狭い場合であっても、隣の列の容器300に把持機構3(板部材32)が接触、干渉することがない。よって、検体移載装置1は、第2ラック200が保持する容器300の列と列との間隔(凹部203の列と列との間隔)が比較的小さい場合であっても、容器300の移し換えを円滑に行うことができる。

[0052]

支持部材33は、フレーム35に設けられた図示しなりがイドシャフトに案内されることによりフレーム35に対し移動可能に設置されている。図3ないし図5に示すように、支持部材33は、フレーム35に固定された板部材32に対し接近・離間するように移動する。

[0053]

[0054]

把持機構3で容器300を掴む(挟持す3)際には、図3に示すように、押圧部材31と板部材32とが離間し、その両者の間に容器300の上端部が位置する状態とされる。容器300を掴んでいない状態では、コイルパネ34の長さは、自然長のL1になっている。なお、ピン30は、図示しない係止部が支持部材33に係止することにより、図3に示す状態以上には貫通孔331から抜けないようになっており、これにより、押圧部材31は、支持部材33から離脱しないようになっている。

[0055]

図3に示す状態から、把持機構開閉用モータ363を作動させて支持部材33を板部材3

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2 に接近させると、図4 に示すように、押圧部材 3 1 と板部材 3 2 とが容器 3 0 0 の外周面に接触し、容器 3 0 0 が押圧部材 3 1 と板部材 3 2 とで挟まれる。

[0056]

図4に示す状態から、さらに把持機構開閉用モータ363を作動させて支持部材33を板部材32に接近させると、図5に示すように、押圧部材31と支持部材33との距離が縮まり、コイルパネ34が圧縮され、その長さがし2に縮む。図5に示す状態では、コイルパネ34の弾性力(押圧力)により、押圧部材31と板部材32との間で容器300かしっかりと挟持される。このとき、押圧部材31が容器300を押圧する押圧力(把持力)の大きさは、コイルパネ34のパネ定数をKとしたとき、K(Li-L2)×2である。なお、コイルパネ34は、容器300を掴んだときの押圧力(把持力)は、K(LューL2)×2で、コイルパネ34の初期状態での弾性力(押圧力)が加算された値になる。

[0057]

また、図5に示す状態では、ピン30は、支持部材33の裏面側(押圧部材31が設置された側と反対側)への突出長さが長くなる。

[0058]

このような把持機構 3 は、図 5 に示すように、10本の容器 3 0 0 を同時に把持することができる。すなわち、本実施形態では、把持機構 3 は、第1ラック100が保持し得る容器 3 0 0 の不数や、第2ラック200が保持し得る容器 3 0 0 の行数と同数の容器 3 0 0 を同時に把持することができるので、検体移載装置 1 は、さらなる移し換え効率の向上が図れ、より高速に容器 3 0 0 の移し換えを行うことができる。また、把持機構 3 を 2 次元方向にのみ移動させることによって移し換えを行うことができるので、後述する移動手段 4 は、把持機構 3 を、把持する容器の配列方向に移動させる必要がなく、よって、移動手段 4 の構造の簡素化が図れる。

[0059]

また、把持機構 3 は、容器 3 0 0 が 1 ~ 9 本の場合(第 1 ラック 1 0 0 に容器 3 0 0 が 1 ~ 9 本しが入っていない場合)であっても、同様にされらを同時に把持することができる。また、押圧部材 3 1 およびコイルパネ 3 4 がされぞれの容器 3 0 0 に対して個別に設けられていることにより、把持する容器 3 0 0 の本数にかかわらず、各容器 3 0 0 に対する押圧部材 3 1 の押圧力(把持力)を一定(容器 3 0 0 が 1 0 本のときと同じ)にすることができる。

[0060]

検体移載装置1は、このような把持機構3を容器300の長手方向を含む2次元方向に移動させる移動手段4を有している。移動手段4は、把持機構3を容器300の長手方向、すなわち上下方向(鉛直方向)に移動させる把持機構昇降機構41と、把持機構3を水平方向(図1中の上下方向)に移動させる把持機構水平移動機構42とで構成される。

[0061]

図7に示すように、把持機構昇降機構41は、支柱411と、支柱411に沿って上下方向に移動可能なプラケット412とを有している。プラケット412には、把持機構3のフレーム35が固定されている。支柱411には、例えば送りねじ、ラック&ビニオンギアなどの機構(図示せず)と、これを駆動するモータ(図示せず)とが設けられており、これらの機構の作動により、プラケット412を上下方向に移動させることができるようになっている。これにより、把持機構昇降機構41は、把持機構3を上下方向に移動させる。

[0062]

図1 および図7 に示すように、 把持機構水平移動機構 4 2 は、 装置本体 2 の両方の側部付近に され でれ設置され、 互いに 平行に位置するレール 4 2 1 、 4 2 2 と、 レール 4 2 1 、 4 2 2 同に架け渡されるように設置され、レール 4 2 1 、 4 2 2 は、 装置本体 2 の上面 から所ている 8 動梁 4 2 3 とを 有している。 レール 4 2 1 、 4 2 2 は、 装置本体 2 の上面 から所

定距離離間した高さに設置されており、第1ラック機送機構11により機送される第1ラック100などと干渉しないようになっている。移動架423の中央部には、把持機構昇降機構41の支柱411の下端部が固定されている。

[0063]

この把持機構水平移動機構42は、例えば送りねじ、 ラック& ピニオンギアなどの機構(図示せず)と、 これを駆動する モータ(図示せず)とを有し、 これらの作動により、 移動 架423をレール421、 422に沿って移動させることができるようになっている。 すなわち、 移動 梁423は、 その長手方向と垂直方向に移動し、 移動 梁423に伴って、 把持機構昇降機構41 および把持機構3は、 図7~図14中の横方向に移動する。

[0064]

図1に示すように、停止位置21に停止した第1ラック100の付近には、容器300に対し投光・受光する反射センサ6が設置されている。この反射センサ6は、その投光部61 および受光部62が容器300に対し相対的に容器300の長手方向に移動しつつ光学的な検出を行うことにより、把持機構3が把持する容器300の長さを検出する長さ検出手段として機能するものである。

[0065]

本実施形態では、反射センサ6は、第1ラック100に保持された10本の容器300の せれぞれに対して設けられている。すなわち、反射センサ6は、10個設置されている。 これらの反射センサ6は、その構成が互いに同じであるので、そのうちの1つについて代 表して説明する。

[0066]

図7に示すように、反射センサ6は、停止位置21に停止した第1ラック100の上端より上側に位置する投光部61 および受光部62と、発光索子および受光索子を内蔵したセンサ本体63と、投光部61 および受光部62とセンサ本体63とを接続する光ファイパ64とを有している。図示の構成では、投光部61 および受光部62は、一体的に構成されている。反射センサ6は、センサ本体63内の発光索子が発した光を光ファイパ64を介して投光部61 に伝達し、投光部61より投光して容器300の外周面に照射する。そして、反射センサ6は、容器300の外周面で反射した反射光を受光部62で受光し、その光を光ファイパ64によりセンサ本体63内の受光索子に導いて、光電変換する。

[0067]

このような反射センサ6は、把持機構3に把持された容器300が把持機構昇降機構41の作動によって第1ラック100から持ち上げられる際、投光部61および受光部62が容器300に対し相対的に容器300の長手方向に移動しつつ光学的な検出を行うことにより、容器300の長さ(把持機構3が把持(挟持)した位置(把持位置)より下側の長さ)を検出する。

[0068]

このような構成により、本実施形態では、簡単な構造で容器 3 0 0 の長さを検出することができ、構造の簡素化および小型化、ならびに製造コストの低減が図れる。

[0069]

また、本実施形態では、第1ラック100が保持し得る10本の容器300のそれぞれに個別に反射センサ6が設けられているので、第1ラック100の10個の凹部101のすちに容器300を保持していない個所がある場合、さらには、第1ラック100に保持された容器300が1本だけの場合であっても、その容器300の長さを検出することができる。

[0070]

また、本実施形態では、反射センサ6の投光部61および受光部62は、装置本体2に対し固定的に設置されているが、把持機構3が把持した容器300の長手方向に移動可能に設置されていてもよい。

[0071]

また、容器300の長さを検出する長さ検出手段は、本実施形態のような構成に限らず、

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例えば、容器300を撮像素子により撮像(撮影)し、その画像を処理(分析)することにより容器300の長さを検出するようなものや、容器300に触れることにより機械的に容器300の長さを検出するようなものであってもより。

[0072]

図1に示すように、規制手段5は、停止位置23に停止した第2ラック200の近くに設置されている。規制手段5は、第2ラック200中の、移し換えを行う列の隣の列に保持された容器300、すなわち、既に(先に)第2ラック200へ移し換えられた容器300で表別する機能を有するものであり、姿勢を規制する対象とする容器300に当接(接触)し得る規制部材51と、該規制部材51を移動させる規制部材移動機構52とを有している。

[0073]

図11に示すように、規制部材51は、停止位置23に停止した第2ラック200が保持する容器300の列方向に沿うとともに水平面にほぼ垂直な姿勢になっている板状の当接部511と、当接部511の上端部からほぼ水平方向に延びるカバー部512とを有している。規制部材51は、第2ラック200の長手方向の長さとほぼ同じ幅を有しており、第2ラック200中の1列の(10本の)容器300の姿勢を同時に規制する。

[0074]

規制部材移動機構52には、例えば送りねじ、ラック&ピニオンギアなどの機構(図示せず)と、これを駆動するモータ(図示せず)とが内蔵されており、これらの機構の作動により、規制部材51を上下方向(鉛直方向)および水平方向(図7~図14中の横方向)に移動させることができるようになっている。

[0075]

図13 および図14 に示すように、規制手段5 は、把持機構3 が把持した容器300を第2 ラック200へ移し換える際、第2 ラック200中の、移し換える列の隣の列に保持された容器300の側部(フランジ302または容器300の胴部の外周面)に当接部510内面を当接させ、これらの隣の列の容器300を図中の右方向に引き寄せるように規制部材移動機構52を作動させる。これにより、第2 ラック200の隣の列に保持された容器300は、移し換え中の(把持機構3 が把持する)容器300 がら離間するように(遠ざかるように)、その姿勢(傾斜の向き)が規制される。

[0076]

図13に示す状態では、規制手段5は、第2ラック200の図中の右側から2列目に移し換えを行うために、図中の右端の列の容器300の姿勢を規制しているが、同様にして、第2ラック200の図中の右側から3列目、4列目および5列目に移し換えを行う際には、されせれ、図中の右側から2列目、3列目および4列目に保持された容器300の姿勢を規制する。

[0077]

このような規制手段5を設けたことにより、容器300の移し換えの際、第2ラック200中の移し換えを行う列の隣の列に保持された容器300と、把持機構3や把持機構3が把持した容器300とが接触、干渉するのをより確実に防止することができ、容器の移し換えを円滑、確実に行うことができる。

[0078]

また、本実施形態では、規制部材51かカパー部512を有することにより、このカパー部512が姿勢を規制した容器300の上端開口を覆す。これにより、移し換え中の容器300に収納された検体が移動中の衝撃等の原因で万一飛び跣ねた場合であっても、その飛沫が第2ラック200に保持された他の容器300に混入するのを防止することができ、コンタミネーションを確実に防ぐことができる。

[0079]

図15に示すように、検体移載装置1は、前述したような検体移載装置1の各部がそれぞれ接続された制御手段15を備えている。この制御手段15は、CPU(Central Processins Unit)と、シーケンサとを有し、ソフト的およびハード的

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に構成されている。なお、制御手段15には、さらに、記憶部(記憶手段)71、表示部72および操作部(入力部)73がそれぞれ接続されている。

[0800]

記憶部71は、プログラムやデータ等を記憶(記録)する、制御手段15に読み取り可能な記憶媒体(記録媒体)を有している。この記憶媒体は、例えば、RAM(Random Access Memory:揮発性、不揮発性のいずれをも含む)、FD(Flop Py Disk(「Flop Py」は登録商標))、HD(Hard Disk)、CDーROM(COm Pact Disc Read-Only Memory)等のような、磁気的、光学的記録媒体、もしくは半導体メモリで構成されている。この記憶媒体は、記憶部71に固定的に設けたもの、もしくは着脱自在に装着するものであり、この記憶媒体には、検体移戦装置1の各部に対応する各種アプリケーションプログラム、後述する特には、検体移戦装置1の制御動作を実行するためのプログラム等の各種プログラムな投種であるとともに、各プログラムで処理されたデータおよび制御手段15に接続された各部からの入力データ等が記憶される。

[0081]

制御手段15は、記憶部71に記憶された各種プログラムおよびデータを必要に応じて読み出し、そのプログラムおよびデータに基づいて、検体移載装置1の各部の作動を制御する。

[0082]

なお、制御手段15は、シーケンサを有さずにすべてソフト的に構成されていてもよく、 または、シーケンサのみを用いてすべてをシーケンス制御で行うようにハード的に構成さ れていてもよい。

[0083]

第1 ラック機送機構 1 1 および 第2 ラック搬送機構 1 2 は、 それぞれ、 制御手段 1 5 に接続されており、 制御手段 1 5 は、 第 1 ラック搬送機構 1 1 および 第 2 ラック機送機構 1 2 の作動を それ ぞれ 制御する。

[0084]

容器用パーコードリーダ13および第2ラック用パーコードリーダ14は、それぞれ、制御手段15に接続されている。容器用パーコードリーダ13および第2ラック用パーコードリーダ14は、それぞれ、パーコードラベル301およびパーコードラベル201から読み取った情報を制御手段15へ出力する。

[0085]

制御手段15は、これら容器用パーコードリーダ18および第2ラック用パーコードリーダ14から入力された情報を、記憶部71に記憶する。これらの情報は、後述する管理用データ(管理用情報)の作成等に用いられる。

[0086]

反射センサ 6 は、制御手段 1 5 に接続されており、制御手段 1 5 からの指示により投光部 6 1 から容器 3 0 0 の外周面へ投光し、その反射光を受光部 6 2 で受光し、センサ本体 6 3 内の受光素子で光電変換して得た信号を制御手段 1 5 へ出力する。

[0087]

把持機構3の把持機構開閉用モータ363は、ドライバ(駆動回路)75を介して、制御手段15に接続されており、制御手段15は、ドライバ75を介して、把持機構開閉用モータ363の作動を制御する。

[0088]

把持機構昇降機構41は、制御手段15に接続されており、制御手段15は、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御する。把持機構昇降機構41を駆動するモータは、パルスモータ(ステッピングモータ)で構成されており、制御手段15は、オープンループ制御により把持機構昇降機構41を制御する。すなわち、制御手段15は、把持機構昇降機構41を駆動するモータに対する駆動パルス数を監視することにより、把持機構3の上下方向の位置(高さ)を把握している。なお、このような構成に限らず、把持機構3の上下方向の位

置を検出する検出器を設け、制御手段15かクローズドループ制御により把持機構昇降機構41を制御するようにしてもよい。

[0089]

把持機構水平移動機構42は、制御手段15に接続されており、制御手段15は、把持機構水平移動機構42を駆動するモータは、パルスモータ(ステッピングモータ)で構成されており、制御手段15は、オープンループ制御により把持機構水平移動機構42を制御する。すなわち、制御手段15は、把持機構水平移動機構42を駆動するモータに対する駆動パルス数を監視することにより、把持機構るの水平方向の位置を把握している。なお、このような構成に限らず、把持機構多の水平方向の位置を検出する検出器を設け、制御手段15がクローズドループ制御により把持機構水平移動機構42を制御するようにしてもよい。

[0090]

規制部材移動機構 5 2 は、制御手段 1 5 に接続されており、制御手段 1 5 は、規制部材移動機構 5 2 の作動を制御して、規制部材 5 1 を移動させる。

[0091]

表示部72は、例えばCRT(Cのthode-Rのソ Tube)、液晶ディスプレイなどで構成されており、例えば操作画面、データ入力画面などを表示する。

[0092]

操作部78は、例えばマウス、キーパッド、キーボードなどで構成されており、データ入力等の際に操作する。

[0093]

また、制御手段15は、検体移載装置1の他に分注装置(図示せず)、分析装置(図示せず)等の各種の装置を含む検体処理システムの全体を管理する管理システム500に接続されている。

[0094]

制御手段15は、後述する管理用データ(管理用情報)等を管理システム500へ出力(送信)し、管理システム500は、その管理用データを、そのまま、または適宜編集等して、図示しない記憶部(記憶手段)に記憶(記録)する。

[0095]

また、制御手段15には、後述する発光素子81および受光センサ82かぞれぞれ接続されている。発光素子81は、制御手段15からの指示により発光して受光センサ82へ向けて投光し、受光センサ82は、受光した光を光電変換して得た信号を制御手段15へ出力する。

[0096]

以上のような検体移載装置1は、把持機構3が把持する容器300の外径にがかわらず、容器300の把持力(押圧部材31の容器300に対する押圧力)を一定に保っ把持力一定化手段(押圧力一定化手段)を有している。把持力一定化手段(押圧力一定化手段)は、コイルパネ34の変形量(縮み量)が所定量になるのを検出する変形量検出手段8を有している。

[0097]

図3に示すように、変形量検出手段8は、支持部材33の長手方向の一端部付近の裏面側(押圧部材31が設置された側と反対側)に設置された例えばLED等で構成された発光素子81(投光部)と、支持部材33の長手方向の他端部付近の裏面側に設置された受光センサ82(受光部)と、コイルパネ34の変形量(縮み量)に応じて発光素子81 および受光センサ82に対し変位する変位部83とで構成されている。

[0098]

発光素子81は、受光センサ82へ向けて光線Rを発し、受光センサ82は、受光した光線Rを光電変換する。光線Rは、把持機構3が把持する容器300の配列方向に沿って投光される。

[0099]

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変位部83は、図示の構成では、ピン30の先端部で構成されている。変位部83は、把持機構3が容器300を把持していない状態(コイルパネ34の変形前)では、発光素子81から発せられた光線Rを遮らない位置にあり、コイルパネ34の変形量(縮み量)が所定量(Li-L2)に達す3ときに光線Rを遮るような位置に来るようになっている(図5参照)。変位部83は、10個の押圧部材31のそれぞれに対応して設けられており、各押圧部材31に対応する変位部83は、それぞれ、光線Rを遮断し得るようになっている。

[0100]

このような構成により、 把持機構 3 が容器 3 0 0 を把持する際、 図4 に示す状態からさらに支持部材 3 3 が根部材 3 2 に接近していくことにより、 コイルパネ 3 4 が圧縮されるとともにピン 3 0 が支持部材 3 3 の裏面に突出していくと、 コイルパネ 3 4 の変形量(縮み量)が所定量(L<sub>1</sub> ー L<sub>2</sub>)に達したときに、 変位部 8 3 が発光素 3 8 1 から発せられた光線 R を 遮り、 受光 センサ 8 2 が光線 R を 受光しなくなる(図 5 に示す状態)。 よって、変形量検出 手段 8 は、 受光 センサ 8 2 が光線 R を 受光 する状態 から 受光しない状態になることにより、 コイルパネ 3 4 の変形量(縮み量)が 所定量( L<sub>1</sub> ー L<sub>2</sub> ) になるのを検出することができる。

[0101]

制御手段15は、把持機構3で容器300を掴む際、受光センサ82からの検出信号を監視しつつ把持機構開開用モータ363を作動させ、受光センサ82が光線Rを受光しなるなったのを検出したところで、把持機構開開用モータ363を停止させるように制御するのような制御を行うことにより、把持機構3が容器300を掴んだとき(図5に示す状態)、容器300の外径にかかわらず、容器300の外径にかかわらず、容器300に、検体移載を置1では、容器300の外径にかかわらず、容器300に、検体移載を置1では、容器300の外径にかかわらず、であように、検体移載を置1では、容器300の外径にかかわらず、であように、検体移載を置1では、容器300の場合でも把持力が弱くなり過ぎずにしっかりと把持することができる。また、外径が太い容器300の場合でも、把持力が強くなり過ぎず、容器300を損傷、破損するようなことがない。

[0102]

以上のように、本実施形態では、把持カー定化手段(押圧カー定化手段)は、変形量検出 手段8と、制御手段15とで構成される。

[0103]

このような把持力一定化手段(押圧力一定化手段)は、10個の押圧部材31のうちのいずれか1つに対応する変位部83が光線Rを遮れば作動するので、把持する容器300が1~9本の場合(第1ラック100に容器300が1~9本しか入っていなかった場合)であっても、前記と同様に、容器300の外径にかかわらず、押圧部材31の押圧力(把持力)を一定(K(LューL。)×2)に保っことができる。

[0104]

また、本実施形態では、10個の押圧部材31に対してそれぞれに発光素子81および受 4 光センサ82を設けるのではなく、1組の発光素子81および受光センサ82を設けることによって上記効果を達成することができるので、構造の簡素化や、製造コストの低減が図れる。

[0105]

次に、図7~図14に基づいて、検体移載装置1の制御動作を順を追って説明する。

[0106]

なお、パーコードラベル 3 0 1 および 2 0 1 に対しての 橋報の読み取り等の制御動作については、既に述べたので、その説明は省略する。

[0107]

[1] 制御手段15は、第1ラック機送機構11、第2ラック搬送機構12および図示

しないラックストッパ機構の作動をそれぞれ制御して、容器300を保持した第1ラック100を停止位置21に停止させ、空きの第2ラック200を停止位置23に停止させる

[0108]

[2] 図7に示すように、制御手段15は、把持機構水平移動機構42の作動を制御して、把持機構3を停止位置21に停止した第1ラック100の上方に移動させる。また、把持機構3は、押圧部材31が板部材32から離間した状態(開いた状態)とされる。図7に示す1つ目の第1ラック100に保持された容器300は、その長さが比較的長い種類のものである。

[0109]

[3] 図8に示すように、制御手段15は、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御して、 把持機構3を所定の位置まで下降させ、押圧部材31と板部材32との間に容器300の 上端付近の部分が位置するようにする。次いで、制御手段15は、把持機構開閉用モータ363を作動させ、把持機構3に容器300を掴ませる。

[0110]

[4] 図9に示すように、制御手段15は、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御して、把持機構3を所定の位置まで上昇させ、容器300を持ち上げて、第1ラック100の凹部101内から抜去する。このとき、反射センサ6は、容器300の外周面に投光するとともに、その反射光を受光している。容器300が持ち上げられて行き、容器300の下端部が反射センサ6の投光部61および受光部62の位置を通過すると、反射センサ6は、反射センサ6は、容器300の下端部の位置を検出することができる。制御手段15は、このような反射センサ6からの検出信号を監視しており、反射センサ6で反射光が検出されなくなったときの把持機構3の高さ精報から、容器300の長さ(把持機費3が把持(挟持)した位置(把持位置)より下側の長さ)に関する精報を得て、その容器300の長さ機報を記憶部71に記憶する。

[0111]

[5] 制御手段15は、把持機構水平移動機構42の作動を制御して、把持機構3で掴んだ容器300が、第2ラック200の5列の凹部203のうちの最も板部材32側(図中の右側)の列の凹部203の上方に位置するように、把持機構3を水平移動させる。次いで、制御手段15は、図10に示すように、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御して、把持機構3を下降させ、把持機構3で掴んでいる容器300の下側を第2ラック200の凹部203内に挿入させる。このとき、制御手段15は、前記[4]で検出した容器300の長さ情報に基づいて、容器300の下端が第2ラック200の底202の直前で停止するように、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御する。次いで、制御手段15は、把持機構開開用モータ363を作動させ、押圧部材31を板部材32から離間させて、把持機構

[0112]

このような制御を行うことにより、検体移載装置1は、容器300の長さにかかわらず、容器300を静かに(丁寧に)第2ラック200へ移し換えることができる。すなわち、把持機構3が下降しすぎて容器300の下端部が第2ラック200の凹部203の底202に衝突したり、逆に、把持機構3の下降距離が足りず、容器300に対する把持を解除した後に、容器300が落下して容器300の下端が底202に衝突したりするようなことがない。よって、容器300の下端が底202に衝突した衝撃によって、容器300内の検体が滴となって飛び跣ねて他の容器300内に混入してコンタミネーションを生けたり、容器300が破損したりするようなことを確実に防止することができる。

[0118]

[6] 図11に示すように、制御手段15は、把持機構昇降機構41を作動させて把持機構3を所定位置まで上昇させた後、把持機構水平移動機構42を作動させて把持機構3を第1ラック100の上方に移動させる。

[0114]

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また、この間に、制御手段15は、第1ラック搬送機構100を作動させて、空になった1つ目の第1ラック100を下流側に搬送して排出するとともに、2つ目の第1ラック100を停止位置21まで搬送する。図11に示す2つ目の第1ラック100に保持された容器300は、その長さが比較的短い種類のものである。

[0115]

また、制御手段15は、規制部材移動機構52の作動を制御して、規制部材51を上昇させた後、第2ラック200の方へ向かって水平方向に前進させ、当接部511側の部分を前記[5]で移し換えた容器300の上方に位置させる。第2ラック200の凹部203の内径は、容器300の外径よりもやや大きくなっており、凹部203の内周面と容器300の外周面との間には、隙間(遊び)があるので、前記[5]で第2ラック200へ移し換えられた容器300は、鉛直方向に対しいずれかの向きにやや傾斜した姿勢になっている。

[0116]

[7] 図12に示すように、制御手段15は、前記[3]と同様にして、把持機構3を所定の位置まで下降させ、2つ目の第1ラック100が保持する容器300を把持機構3に掴ませる。また、制御手段15は、規制部材移動機構52の作動を制御して、前記[5]で第2ラック200へ移し換えられた容器300の上端部が当接部511の内側に位置するように、規制部材51を下降させる。

[0117]

[8] 図13に示すように、制御手段15は、前記 [4] と同様にして、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御して、把持機構3を上昇させ、容器300を第1ラック100から持ち上げるとともに、反射センサ6の検出結果に基づいて、容器300の長さ情報を得て、その長さ情報を記憶部71に記憶する。また、制御手段15は、規制部材移動機構52の作動を制御して、規制部材51を規制部材移動機構52側に向かって水平方向に移動させる。これにより、前記 [5] で第2ラック200へ移し換えられた容器300のフランジ302に当接部511が当接し、これらの容器300の上端部が規制部材移動機構52側に引き寄せられて、これらの容器300の姿勢が第2ラック200の空いている側から遠ざかるように傾斜するような姿勢に規制される(図6参照)。

[0118]

[9] 制御手段15は、把持機構水平移動機構42の作動を制御して、把持機構3で掴んだ容器300が、第2ラック200の5列の凹部203のうちの既に容器300が移し換えられた列の隣の列の上方に位置するように、把持機構3を水平移動させる。次いで、制御手段15は、図14に示すように、把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御して、把持機構3を下降させ、把持機構3で掴んでいる容器300の下側を第2ラック200の凹部203内に挿入させる。

[0119]

このとき、把持機構3における容器300を挟持する部分の一方が板部材32で構成されていることにより、既に移し換えた、隣の列の容器300との隙間400が狭い場合であっても、その隙間400に板部材32が容易に挿入することができる。よって、検体移載装置1は、容器300が挿入する凹部203の配列ピッチが比較的小さい第2ラック200に対しても容器300の移し換えを円滑に行うことができる。

[0120]

また、このとき、前記[8]で説明したように、既に移し換えた、隣の列の容器300の姿勢が規制手段5により規制されているので、これらの容器300と、下降する容器300や把持機構3(板部材32)とが接触、干渉するのを確実に防止することができ、容器300を円滑かつ丁寧に移し換えることができ、容器300の破損等を確実に防止することができる。

[0121]

また、このとき、既に移し換えた容器300の上端開口は、規制部材51のカパー部51 2により覆われている。これにより、移し換えている途中の容器300内の検体が万一飛

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び跳ねた場合であっても、その飛沫が既に移し換えた容器300内に混入するおそれがなく、コンタミネーションを確実に防止することができる。

[0122]

また、このとき、制御手段15は、前記[5]と同様の制御を行い、容器300の下端を第2ラック200の底202の直前で停止させてから、把持機構3の容器300に対する把持を解除させる。今回移し換えている容器300は、前記[4]で移し換えた容器300よりも長さが短いので、把持機構3は、前記[4]のとき(図10)と比べ、より方まで下降してから容器300に対する把持を解除する。このように、検体移載装置1は、前記のような容器300の長さ検出手段の検出結果に基づいて把持機構3および把持機構昇降機構41の作動を制御するので、第1ラック搬送機構11によって第1ラック100毎に長さの異なる容器300が混流されてくる場合であっても、移し換え時に容器300の下端が第2ラック200の底202に衝突するのを防止し、静か(丁寧)に移し換えを行うことができる。

[0123]

[10] 以後、検体移載装置1は、同様にして、第2ラック200の図中右側から3列目、4列目、5列目の凹部203にも順次容器300を移し換える。

[0124]

せして、当該第2 ラック200への移し換えが終了したら、制御手段(橋報作成手段)15は、記憶部71に記憶されている、容器用パーコードリーダ13が各容器300のパーコードラベル301から読み取った精報と、第2 ラック用パーコードリーダ14が第2 ラック200のパーコードラベル201から読み取った橋報とを読み出し、これらの情報に基づいて、第2 ラック200に保持(収納)された各容器300をされぞれ特定する管理データ(管理情報)を作成し、その管理データを管理システム500へ出力(送信)する。また、作成した管理データを記憶部71に記憶してもよい。

[0125]

前記管理用データには、例えば、ラックID番号等の第2ラック200を特定する情報と、第2ラック200の容器300が保持される各位置と該各位置に保持される容器300とを対応させて該各容器300を特定する情報とが含まれている。

[0126]

ここで、前記第2 ラック200の容器300が保持される各位置と該各位置に保持される容器300とを対応させて該各容器300を特定する精報(精報の作成)について、その一例を説明する。

[0127]

予め、第2ラック200の50個の凹部203に対し、それぞれ、その位置を示す(位置に対応する)、例えば、「1」~「50」の番号(凹部番号)を付しておき、各凹部203に挿入された容器300の容器ID番号と、各凹部203に、容器ID番号とを、それぞれ対応付ける。例えば、凹部位置番号「1」の凹部203に、容器ID番号「a」の容器300が挿入された場合には、その旨を示すデータを作成し、これを、凹部番号「1」~「50」のすべての凹部203について行う。

[0128]

この場合、第2ラック200内に、容器300が挿入されていない凹部203(空の凹部203)が存在するとき、例えば、凹部番号「2」の凹部203に容器300が挿入されなかったとき(凹部番号「2」の凹部203が空のとき)は、その旨を示すデータを作成する。

[0129]

なお、前記容器 3 0 0 が挿入された凹部 2 0 3 の凹部番号と対応付けする容器 3 0 0 側の 情報は、前記容器 3 0 0 の容器 I D番号に限らない。また、前記容器 3 0 0 0 側の情報には 、前記容器 3 0 0 の容器 I D番号に加えて、さらに、その容器 3 0 0 に付されたパーコー ドラベル 3 0 1 が担持する情報(容器 3 0 0 に収納されている検体に関する(対応する) 情報)のうちの 1 または 2 以上を含めてもよい。

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[0130]

また、前記管理用データには、例えば、第2ラック200に保持された容器300の本数を示す情報や、当該容器300の移し換えを行った検体移載装置1を特定する情報等を含めてもよい。

[0131]

また、前記容器300の第2ラック200への移し換えが終了したら、制御手段15は、第2ラック機送機構12を作動させ、当該第2ラック200を下流側へ搬送し、第2ラック排出部24へ排出するとともに、次の空きの第2ラック200を停止位置23に搬送し、この第2ラック200に対して同様に容器300を第1ラック100から移し換え、前記と同様に、管理用データを作成し、管理システム500へ出力(送信)する。そして、検体移載装置1は、このような作動を繰り返す。

[0132]

第2ラック200に保持された各容器300を管理するにあたって、前記管理用データを用いることにより、第2ラック200に貼着されているパーコードラベル201 (例えば、ラックID番号)で、各々の第2ラック200毎に、その第2ラック200に保持された各容器300を一括して管理することができ、これにより、多数の容器300を、容易、確実、かつ効率良く管理することができる。

[0133]

以上、本発明の検体移載装置を図示の実施形態について説明したが、本発明は、これに限定されるものではなく、検体移載装置を構成する各部は、同様の機能を発揮し得る任意の 構成のものと置換することができる。また、任意の構成物が付加されていてもよい。

[0134]

例えば、把持機構を移動させる移動手段は、把持機構を3次元方向に移動可能なものでもよい。また、把持機構を移動させる移動手段が把持機構を容器の長手方向にのみ移動させるよう構成され、第1ラックあよび第2ラックを把持機構に対し第1ラックの容器の配列方向と直交する方向に移動させることにより、容器の移し換えを行うように構成されていてもよい。

[0135]

また、本発明では、第1ラックが保持する容器の本数は、10本に限らず、2以上であれば何本でもよい。

[0136]

また、第2ラックは、容器を10行×5列に保持するものに限らず、nおよびmをそれでれ2以上の任意の整数として、容器をn行×m列に保持するものとすることができる。その場合、nは、第1ラックが保持する容器の本数に一致しなくてもよいが、一致するのが好ましい。nが、第1ラックが保持する容器の本数に一致することにより、より効率良く高速に移し換えを行うことができる。

[0137]

また、把持機構が把持し得る容器の本数は、第1ラックが保持し得る容器の本数や、第2ラック200が保持し得る容器の行数と同数でなくてもよく、それらより少なくても良いが、同数であるのが好ましい。これにより、より高速に容器の移し換えを行うことができるとともに、把持機構を2次元方向にのみ移動させることによって移し換えを行うことができるので、把持機構の移動手段は、把持機構を、把持する容器の配列方向に移動させる必要がなく、よって、移動手段の構造の簡素化が図れる。

[0138]

また、容器の長さを検出する長さ検出手段は、容器に投光・受光する投光部および受光部が移動可能に設けられ、停止した容器に対してこの投光部および受光部が移動して、容器の長さを検出するように構成されていてもよい。

[0139]

また、把持カー定化手段(押圧カー定化手段)は、電気的な制御を利用するものに限らず 、機械的な機構により、容器の外径にかかわらず把持機構の把持力を一定化するよう構成 されたものでもより。

[0140]

また、規制手段の規制部材は、板状のものに限らず、第2ラックに保持された容器の外周面に当接し得る棒状の部分を有する部材であってもよい。また、規制した容器の上端開口を覆わないものでもよい。

[0141]

また、本発明は、第1ラックに保持された容器を第2ラックへ移し換える検体移載装置に限らず、逆に、第2ラックに保持された容器を第1ラックへ移し換える検体移載装置にも適用することができる。また、本発明の検体移載装置は、第1ラックから第2ラックへの移し換えとの両方を行うことができるもの(その2つの作動状態を切り換えられるもの)であってもよい。

[0142]

【発明の効果】

以上述べたように、本発明によれば、検体を収納した容器をラックからラックへ効率良く 円滑に移し換えることができる。

[0143]

また、管理用情報を作成する情報作成手段を有する場合には、第2ラックに保持され、検体が収納された各容器を管理するにあたって、管理用情報を用いることにより、第2ラックに付されている第2情報担持体(例えば、第2ラックのID番号に関する情報)で、各々の第2ラック毎に、各容器を一括して管理することができ、これにより、多数の容器を、容易、確実、かつ効率良く管理することができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

- 【図1】図1は、本発明の検体移載装置の実施形態を示す平面図である。
- 【図2】図1に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す斜視図である。
- 【図3】図1に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す断面平面図(容器を掴む前の状態)である。
- 【図4】図1に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す断面平面図(容器を掴む途中の状態)である。
- 【図 5 】図 1 に示す検体移載装置における把持機構を示す断面平面図(容器を掴んだ状態)である。
- 【図6】図1に示す検体移載装置におけるガイド部材および第2ラックを示す斜視図である。
- 【図7】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成およひ作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図8】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図9】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成およひ作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図10】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図11】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図12】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図13】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。 【図14】図1に示す検体移載装置の構成および作動状態を示す断面側面図である。
- 【図15】図1に示す検体移載装置の概略的なプロック図である。

【符号の説明】

- 1 検体移載装置
- 11 第1ラック搬送機構
- 12 第2ラック搬送機構
- 13 容器用パーコードリーダ
- 14 第2ラック用バーコードリーダ
- 15 制御手段
- 2 装置本体
- 2.1 停止位置

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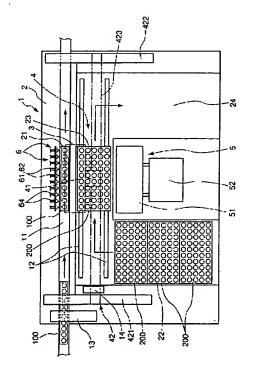
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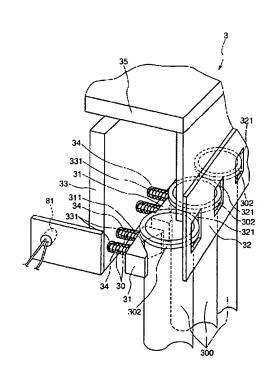
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2 2
          第2ラック供給部
2 3
          停止位置
          第2ラック排出部
2 4
          把持機構
3
          ピン
3 0
          押圧部材
3 1
3 1 1
          凹部
3 2
          板部材
3 2 1
          逃げ部
                                                               10
3 3
          支持部材
3 3 1
          貫通孔
          コイルパネ
3 4
3 5
          フレーム
          駆動手段
3 6
3 6 1
          送りねり
3 6 2
          ペルト
3 6 3
          把持機構開閉用モータ
4
          移動手段
4 1
          把持機構昇降機構
4 1 1
          支 柱
                                                               20
4 1 2
          プラケット
4 2
          把持機構水平移動機構
421、422 レール
4 2 3
          移動梁
5
          規制手段
5 1
          規制部材
          当接部
5 1 1
5 1 2
          カパー部
5 2
          規制部材移動機構
6
          反射センサ
                                                               30
          投光部
6 1
6 2
          受光部
          センサ本体
6 3
6 4
          光ファイバ
7 1
          記憶部
7 2
          表示部
7 3
          操作部
7 5
          ドライバ
8
          变形量検出手段
8 1
          発光素子
                                                               40
8 2
          受光センサ
8 3
          变位部
1 0 0
          第1ラック
1 0 1
          凹部
2 0 0
          第2ラック
2 0 1
          パーコードラベル
2 0 2
          底
2 0 3
          凹部
3 0 0
          容 器
3 0 1
          パーコードラベル
                                                               50
```

3	0	2	フランジ
4	0	0	隙 間
5	0	0	管理システ <i>し</i>
P			* 繪

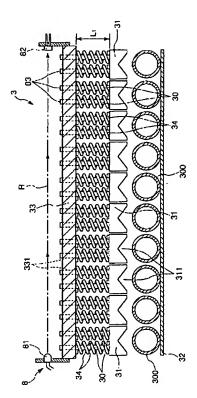
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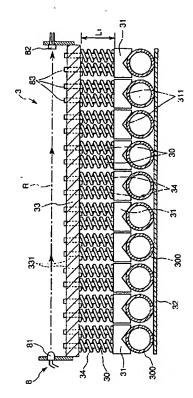
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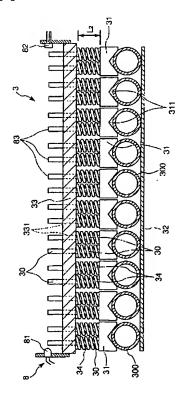
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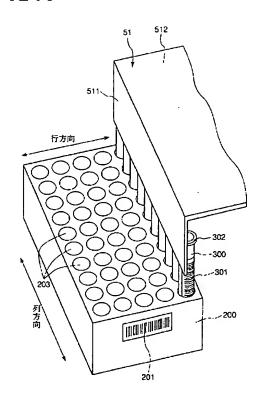
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[**2**5]

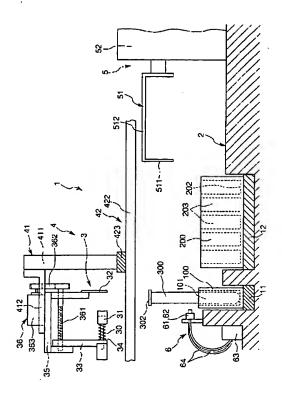


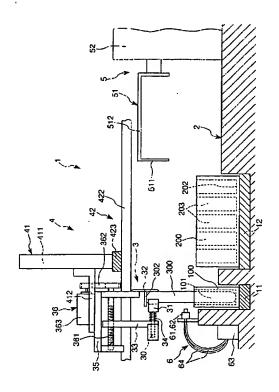
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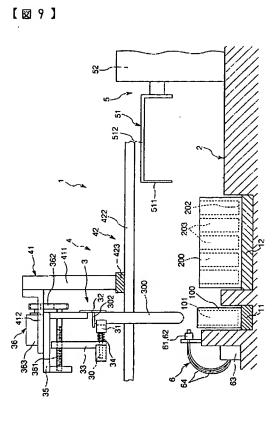
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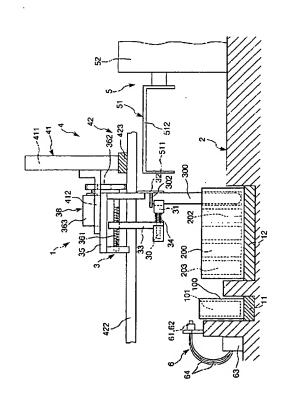




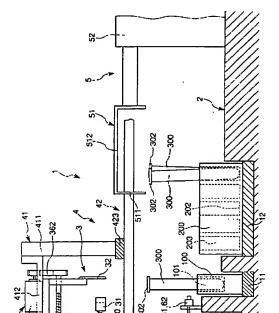


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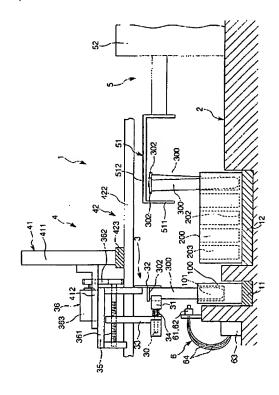




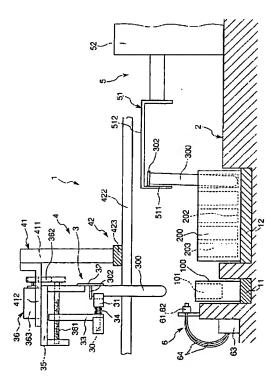
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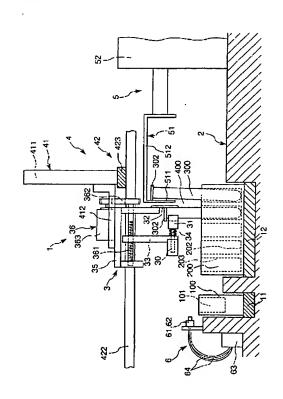
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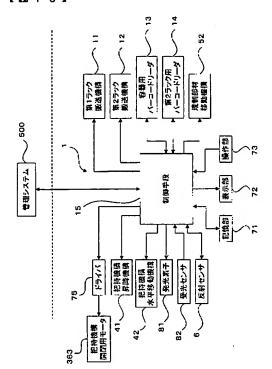
[ 🖾 1 3 ]



[図14]



[図15]



### フロントページの続き

(72)発明者 池谷 昌己 東京都三鷹市牟礼6丁目22番1号 アロカ株式会社内 (72)発明者 藤木 邦袖 東京都三鷹市牟礼6丁目22番1号 アロカ株式会社内 ドターム(参考)2G058 CA04 CB09 CB15 CB20 GB10 GC05

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## Bibliography

- (19) [Publication country] Japan Patent Office (JP)
- (12) [Kind of official gazette] Open patent official report (A)
- (11) [Publication No.] JP,2004-61136,A (P2004-61136A)
- (43) [Date of Publication] February 26, Heisei 16 (2004. 2.26)
- (54) [Title of the Invention] Specimen transfer equipment
- (51) [The 7th edition of International Patent Classification]

G01N 35/04 G01N 35/02

### [FI]

G01N 35/04 H G01N 35/02 C

[Request for Examination] Un-asking.

[The number of claims] 16

[Mode of Application] OL

[Number of Pages] 26

- (21) [Application number] Application for patent 2002-215898 (P2002-215898)
- (22) [Filing date] July 24, Heisei 14 (2002. 7.24)
- (71) [Applicant]

[Identification Number] 390029791

[Name] Aloka, Inc.

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo

(74) [Attorney]

[Identification Number] 100091627

[Patent Attorney]

[Name] Morning ratio One husband

(74) [Attorney]

[Identification Number] 100091292

[Patent Attorney]

[Name] Masuda Tatsuya

(72) [Inventor(s)]

[Name] Ida Taido

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo An Aloka stock meeting in the company

(72) [Inventor(s)]

[Name] Niwayama Hiroaki

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo An Aloka stock meeting in the company

(72) [Inventor(s)]

[Name] Iketani Masaki

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo An Aloka stock meeting in the company

(72) [Inventor(s)]

[Name] Fujiki Kunihiro

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo An Aloka stock meeting in the company

[Theme code (reference)]

2G058

[F term (reference)]

2G058 CA04 CB09 CB15 CB20 GB10 GC05

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#### **Epitome**

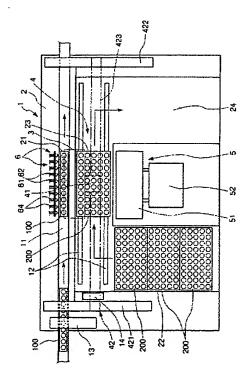
### (57) [Abstract]

[Technical problem] Offer the specimen transfer equipment to which the container which contained the specimen can be smoothly moved from a rack to a rack efficiently, and can be changed.

[Means for Solution] The specimen transfer equipment 1 is equipment to which the container of the shape of a tube which contains the specimen held at the 1st rack 100 is moved to the 2nd rack 200, and is changed. The body 2 of equipment, The grasping device 3 which can grasp two or more containers simultaneously, and the migration means 4 to which the grasping device 3 is moved, A regulation means to regulate the position of the container held at the train of the next door of a train which performs the moving substitute in the 2nd rack 200, The 1st rack conveyance device 11 in which the 1st rack 100 is conveyed, and the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 in which the 2nd rack 200 is conveyed, It has the bar code reader 13 for containers which reads the information which the bar code label given to the container supports, the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack which reads the information which the bar code label given to the 2nd rack 200 supports, and the reflective sensor 6 which floodlights and receives light to a container.

[Selection drawing] drawing 1

## [Translation done.]



## [Translation done.]

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#### **CLAIMS**

## [Claim(s)]

### [Claim 1]

It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which holds two or more [ of said container ] for the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack holding two or more [ of said container ],

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device to the longitudinal direction of said container at least, The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of said grasping device and said migration means.

# [Claim 2]

It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which arranges said container in two or more one train, and holds the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack which holds said container in a n line xm train (however, n and m, respectively two or more integers),

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device to the longitudinal direction of said container at least, The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of said grasping device and said migration means.

# [Claim 3]

It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which arranges said n containers (however, n two or more integers) in one train, and holds the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack which holds said container in a n line xm train (however, m two or more integers),

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device in the two-dimensional direction which contains the longitudinal direction of said container at least,

The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of said grasping device and said migration means.

## [Claim 4]

The specimen transfer equipment concerned is a specimen transfer equipment according to claim 1 to 3 which is what moves said container from said 1st rack to said 2nd rack, and changes it.

# [Claim 5]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 4 to which the 1st information carrier with the information corresponding to the specimen contained by the container concerned is given to said container, and the 2nd information carrier which has the information which specifies the 2nd rack concerned in said 2nd rack is given.

## [Claim 6]

Said 1st information carrier is a specimen transfer equipment according to claim 5 which is the label to which the bar code was given.

# [Claim 7]

Said 2nd information carrier is a specimen transfer equipment according to claim 5 or 6 which is the label to which the bar code was given.

# [Claim 8]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 5 to 7 which has the 1st reader which reads the information which said 1st information carrier supports.

# [Claim 9]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 5 to 8 which has the 2nd reader which reads the information which said 2nd information carrier supports.

# [Claim 10]

The 1st reader which reads the information which said 1st information carrier supports,

The 2nd reader which reads the information which said 2nd information carrier supports,

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 5 to 7 which has an information creation means to create the administrative information which can specify said container held at said 2nd rack based on the information read by said 1st reader and said 2nd reader.

# [Claim 11]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 10 which has a storage means to memorize said administrative information.

# [Claim 12]

Said administrative information is a specimen transfer equipment including the information which the information which specifies said 2nd rack, and said container held in each location where said container of this 2nd rack is held, and this each location are made to correspond, and specifies this each container

according to claim 10 or 11.

[Claim 13]

The information which specifies said each container is a specimen transfer equipment including the information about the ID number of each of this container according to claim 12.

[Claim 14]

The information which specifies said 2nd rack is a specimen transfer equipment including the information about the ID number of this 2nd rack according to claim 5 to 13.

[Claim 15]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 1 to 14 which has the conveyance device in which said 1st rack is conveyed.

[Claim 16]

The specimen transfer equipment according to claim 1 to 15 which has the conveyance device in which said 2nd rack is conveyed.

## [Translation done.]

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- 1. This document has been translated by computer. So the translation may not reflect the original precisely.
- 2.\*\*\*\* shows the word which can not be translated.
- 3.In the drawings, any words are not translated.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention]

This invention relates to the specimen transfer equipment to which the container which contains the specimen held at the rack is moved to other racks, and is changed.

[0002]

[Description of the Prior Art]

Conventionally, in the specimen analysis apparatus which analyzes automatically the distributivepouring equipment which pours a specimen (sample) distributively automatically, and a specimen, each specimen is held in the container of the shape of a tube like a test tube, and this container is held at the small rack which holds these in one train in two or more units, and is conveyed the whole rack. [0003]

Moreover, in case a specimen is saved, the large rack which holds many containers in the shape of a matrix is used.

[0004]

For this reason, in case the remaining parent specimens which finished pouring distributively the child specimen for analyzing by the specimen analysis apparatus with distributive-pouring equipment, for example are saved, moving a container from a small rack to a large rack, and changing it is performed. [0005]

However, there was no equipment to which the container which contained the specimen is automatically moved from a rack to a rack, and is changed conventionally. For this reason, since it depended on the help, moving a container from a rack to a rack and changing it had the problem of requiring great time and effort and time amount, when many specimens were processed in a hospital or the inspection pin center, large.

[0006]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]

The object of this invention is to offer the specimen transfer equipment to which the container which contained the specimen can be smoothly moved from a rack to a rack efficiently, and can be changed. [0007]

[Means for Solving the Problem]

Such an object is attained by this invention of following the (1) - (16).

[8000]

(1) It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which holds two or more [ of said container ] for the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack holding two or more [ of said container ],

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device to the longitudinal direction of said container at least, The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of said grasping device and said migration means.

[0009]

(2) It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which arranges said container in two or more one train, and holds the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack which holds said container in a n line xm train (however, n and m, respectively two or more integers),

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device to the longitudinal direction of said container at least, The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of JP-A-2004-61136 Page 8 of 49

said grasping device and said migration means.

[0010]

(3) It is the specimen transfer equipment moved and changed between the 1st rack which arranges said n containers (however, n two or more integers) in one train, and holds the container of the shape of a tube which contains a specimen, and the 2nd rack which holds said container in a n line xm train (however, m two or more integers),

The grasping device which can grasp said two or more containers simultaneously,

A migration means to move said grasping device in the two-dimensional direction which contains the longitudinal direction of said container at least,

The specimen transfer equipment characterized by having the control means which controls actuation of said grasping device and said migration means.

[0011]

(4) The specimen transfer equipment concerned is a specimen transfer equipment the above (1) which is what moves said container from said 1st rack to said 2nd rack, and changes it thru/or given in either of (3).

[0012]

(5) A specimen transfer equipment given in the above (4) to which the 1st information carrier with the information corresponding to the specimen contained by the container concerned is given to said container, and the 2nd information carrier which has the information which specifies the 2nd rack concerned in said 2nd rack is given.

[0013]

(6) Said 1st information carrier is a specimen transfer equipment given in the above (5) which is the label to which the bar code was given.

[0014]

(7) Said 2nd information carrier is a specimen transfer equipment the above (5) which is the label to which the bar code was given, or given in (6).

[0015]

(8) The above (5) which has the 1st reader which reads the information which said 1st information carrier supports thru/or a specimen transfer equipment given in either of (7).

[0016]

(9) The above (5) which has the 2nd reader which reads the information which said 2nd information carrier supports thru/or a specimen transfer equipment given in either of (8).

[0017]

(10) The 1st reader which reads the information which said 1st information carrier supports,

The 2nd reader which reads the information which said 2nd information carrier supports,

The above (5) which has an information creation means to create the administrative information which can specify said container held at said 2nd rack based on the information read by said 1st reader and

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said 2nd reader thru/or a specimen transfer equipment given in either of (7).

[0018]

(11) A specimen transfer equipment given in the above (10) which has a storage means to memorize said administrative information.

[0019]

(12) Said administrative information is a specimen transfer equipment the above (10) including the information which the information which specifies said 2nd rack, and said container held in each location where said container of this 2nd rack is held, and this each location are made to correspond, and specifies this each container, or given in (11).

[0020]

(13) The information which specifies said each container is a specimen transfer equipment given in the above (12) including the information about the ID number of each of this container.

[0021]

- (14) The information which specifies said 2nd rack is a specimen transfer equipment the above (5) including the information about the ID number of this 2nd rack thru/or given in either of (13). [0022]
- (15) The above (1) which has the conveyance device in which said 1st rack is conveyed thru/or a specimen transfer equipment given in either of (14).

[0023]

(16) The above (1) which has the conveyance device in which said 2nd rack is conveyed thru/or a specimen transfer equipment given in either of (15).

[0024]

[Embodiment of the Invention]

Hereafter, the specimen transfer equipment of this invention is explained to a detail based on the suitable operation gestalt shown in an accompanying drawing.

[0025]

The top view in which <u>drawing 1</u> shows the operation gestalt of the specimen transfer equipment of this invention, and <u>drawing 2</u> The perspective view, <u>drawing 3</u>, or <u>drawing 5</u> which shows the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in <u>drawing 1</u> The cross-section top view and <u>drawing 6</u> which show the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in <u>drawing 1</u>, respectively The cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which show the perspective view, <u>drawing 7</u>, or <u>drawing 14</u> which shows the guide member and the 2nd rack in the specimen transfer equipment shown in <u>drawing 1</u> to <u>drawing 1</u>, respectively, and <u>drawing 15</u> are the rough block diagrams of the specimen transfer equipment shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

The specimen transfer equipment 1 shown in <u>drawing 1</u> is equipment to which the container 300 of the shape of a tube which contains the specimen held at the 1st rack 100 is moved to the 2nd rack 200, and

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is changed. The body 2 of equipment, The grasping device 3 which can grasp two or more containers 300 simultaneously, and the migration means 4 to which the grasping device 3 is moved, A regulation means 5 to regulate the position of the container 300 held at the train of the next door of a train which performs the moving substitute in the 2nd rack 200, The 1st rack conveyance device 11 in which the 1st rack 100 is conveyed, and the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 in which the 2nd rack 200 is conveyed, The bar code reader 13 for containers which reads the information which the bar code label (the 1st information carrier) 301 given to the container 300 supports (the 1st reader). It has the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack (the 2nd reader) which reads the information which the bar code label (the 2nd information carrier) 201 given to the 2nd rack 200 supports, and the reflective sensor 6 which floodlights and receives light to a container 300.

[0027]

A container 300 is a container like a test tube which makes the shape of a long tube (the shape of a cylinder like object with base) in the vertical direction. The specimen (for example, body fluid, such as blood and a constituent of blood) is contained by this container 300 (hold). With the configuration of a graphic display, the container 300 has the flange 302 by which projection formation was carried out over the perimeter on the periphery of the upper bed opening (refer to drawing 2). Moreover, a container 300 has two or more sorts of things from which the die length differs (refer to drawing 14). [0028]

As shown in drawing 6, the bar code label 301 with which the bar code with which the information (for example, a specimen ID number, a patient ID number, a patient name, a hospital name, blood collecting time, a container ID number, etc.) about the specimen (it corresponds) contained was supported was given to the peripheral face of a container 300 is stuck. In addition, in drawings other than drawing 6, the graphic display of the bar code label 301 is omitted. [0029]

The 1st rack 100 is constituted so that it may arrange to a single tier and can hold to the longitudinal direction of the 1st rack 100, where two or more containers (this operation gestalt 10) 300 are stood (standing-up condition). That is, ten crevices (hole) 101 which the part of the container 300 bottom inserts are formed in the 1st rack 100 together with the single tier.

[0030]

the 1st rack 100 has the almost the same height of the upper bed of the container 300 contained irrespective of the difference in the die length of a container 300 -- according to the die length of a container 300, the height of the bottom of a crevice 101 is adjusted like. For example, the bottom of a crevice 101 is high from the 1st rack 100 which contains the container 300 with the comparatively long die length which shows the 1st rack 100 which contains the container 300 with the comparatively short die length shown in drawing 11 to drawing 7 (to raised bottom). In addition, two or more (die length is equal) containers 300 of the same class shall be contained by the 1st one rack 100. [0031]

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As shown in <u>drawing 6</u>, the 2nd rack 200 is constituted so that it may arrange in the shape of a matrix (this operation gestalt ten line x5 train) and can hold, where two or more containers (this operation gestalt 50) 300 are stood (standing-up condition). That is, 50 crevices (hole) 203 which the part of the container 300 bottom inserts are formed in the 2nd rack 200 together with ten line x5 train. The array pitch of the crevice 203 of the direction of a train of this 2nd rack 200 is equal to the array pitch of the crevice 101 of the 1st rack 100. That is, the array pitch of the container 300 held at the 1st rack 100 and the array pitch of the direction of a train of the container 300 held at the 2nd rack 200 become equal mutually.

[0032]

The bar code label 201 to which the bar code with which the information (for example, rack ID number etc.) which specifies the 2nd rack 200 concerned was supported was given is stuck on the side face of the 2nd rack 200. In addition, in drawings other than <u>drawing 6</u>, the graphic display of the bar code label 201 is omitted.

[0033]

As shown in <u>drawing 1</u>, the 1st rack conveyance device 11 in which the 1st rack 100 is conveyed to the longitudinal direction is installed in the body 2 of equipment. The 1st rack conveyance device 11 consists of for example, belt conveyance devices (band conveyor) etc.

[0034]

The 1st rack feed zone (not shown) which stores two or more 1st rack 100 holding a container 300 is prepared in the upstream (left-hand side in <u>drawing 1</u>) of the 1st rack conveyance device 11, and the 1st rack 100 holding a container 300 is supplied to the 1st rack conveyance device 11 from this 1st rack feed zone.

[0035]

When the 1st rack 100 supplied to the 1st rack conveyance device 11 is conveyed rightward in <u>drawing</u> 1 and comes to the predetermined halt location 21, it is made to stop by actuation of the rack stopper device which is not illustrated. In the halt location 21, the container 300 which the 1st rack 100 concerned holds moves to the 2nd rack 200 by actuation of the grasping device 3 mentioned later and the migration means 4, and it is changed. The 1st rack 100 which became empty is further conveyed and discharged rightward in <u>drawing 1</u> by actuation of the 1st rack conveyance device 11 after a moving substitute.

[0036]

Moreover, it is installed in the body 2 of equipment so that the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 in which the 2nd rack 200 is conveyed along with the longitudinal direction may be concurrent with the 1st rack conveyance device 11 (parallel). The 2nd rack conveyance device 12 consists of for example, belt conveyance devices (band conveyor) etc.

[0037]

The 2nd rack feed zone 22 which stores two or more 2nd empty rack 200 is adjoined and formed in the

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upstream (left-hand side in <u>drawing 1</u>) of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. The 2nd rack 200 stored by the 2nd rack feed zone 22 is extruded by actuation of the extruder style which is not illustrated by above [ in <u>drawing 1</u> ], and sequential supply is carried out to the upper section of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. The travelling direction of the 2nd rack 200 in the 2nd rack feed zone 22 is almost perpendicular to the conveyance direction of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. [0038]

When the 2nd rack 200 of the opening supplied to the upper section of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 is conveyed in the direction of <u>drawing 1</u> Nakamigi and comes to the predetermined halt location 23, it is made to stop by actuation of the rack stopper device which is not illustrated. The container 300 which the 1st rack 100 held is moved to the 2nd rack 200 which stopped in the halt location 23, and is changed.

[0039]

This halt location 23 is equivalent to the halt location 21 of the 1st rack 100, and is located in the location where the 2nd rack 200 which stopped in the halt location 23 and the 1st rack 100 which stopped in the halt location 21 are almost the same about those conveyance directions.

After a moving substitute finishes, the 2nd rack 200 holding a container 300 is further conveyed rightward in <u>drawing 1</u> by actuation of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. [0041]

The 2nd rack blowdown section 24 which stores two or more 2nd rack 200 holding the container 300 moved and changed is adjoined and formed in the downstream (right-hand side in <u>drawing 1</u>) of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. The 2nd rack 200 conveyed to the downstream of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 is extruded by actuation of the extruder style which is not illustrated by down [ in <u>drawing 1</u> ], and is discharged to the 2nd rack blowdown section 24. The travelling direction of the 2nd rack 200 which can be set 2nd rack blowdown section 24 is almost perpendicular to the conveyance direction of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12.

[0042]

The bar code reader 13 for containers which reads the information which the bar code label 301 given to the container 300 supports is installed in the upstream of the 1st rack conveyance device 11. The bar code reader 13 for containers reads to the bar code label 301 of each container 300 held at the 1st rack 100 concerned, respectively, in case the 1st rack 100 conveyed according to the 1st rack conveyance device 11 passes the bar code reader 13 for containers.

[0043]

The bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack which reads the information which the bar code label 201 given to the 2nd rack 200 supports is installed in the upstream of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12. The bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack reads to the bar code label 201 of the 2nd rack 200 concerned, when the 2nd rack 200 is supplied to the upper section of the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 from the 2nd

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rack feed zone 22.

[0044]

As shown in <u>drawing 5</u>, the grasping device (grip device) 3 in this operation gestalt can grasp simultaneously ten containers 300 located in a line with one train, and has the composition that the plate-like plate member 32 which pinches a container 300 between the press member 31 which presses the peripheral face of a container 300, and this press member 31, and ten parts which it has were installed. Since ten parts corresponding to each container 300 in the grasping device 3 are the same configurations mutually, below, about one of places [ them ], it represents and they are explained. [0045]

As shown in <u>drawing 2</u>, the press member 31 has the about V character-like crevice (notch) 311 in the contact section to a container 300, and two flat surfaces which constitute this crevice 311 contact the peripheral face near the upper bed of a container 300 (contact). When the press member 31 has a crevice 311, the grasping device 3 can grasp a container 300 certainly without play (shakiness), and when a crevice 311 makes the shape of about V characters especially, it can grasp a container 300 certainly without play (shakiness) irrespective of the outer diameter of a container 300. [0046]

Both ten press members 31 are supported by one tabular supporter material 33. The supporter material 33 is installed with the position almost parallel to the plate member 32. It is prepared in the crevice 311 and opposite hand of each press member 31 so that the two rod-like pin 30 may project, and the supporter material 33 is supporting each press member 31 by inserting in the breakthrough 331 by which this pin 30 was formed in the supporter material 33. Each press member 31 is movable to the supporter material 33, respectively, when a pin 30 slides on the inside of a breakthrough 331. [0047]

Between the press member 31 and the supporter material 33, the coil spring (energization member) 34 which energizes the press member 31 in the press direction over a container 300 is installed. With the configuration of a graphic display, the coil spring 34 is installed in the inside, after the pin 30 has inserted, and it is prepared two [ at a time ] to each press member 31. [0048]

The plate member 32 is a plate-like member. With this operation gestalt, the plate member 32 has the roll off (opening) 321 which a flange 302 can insert in the location corresponding to the flange 302 of a container 300. Since a flange 302 does not become obstructive but the plate member 32 contacts certainly the peripheral face near the upper bed of a container 300 even if it is the case where this grasps the container 300 which has a flange 302, the grasping device 3 can grasp a container 300 certainly.

[0049]

The plate member 32 is being fixed to the frame 35 of the grasping device 3. Although the plate member 32 to ten containers 300 is formed in one with the configuration of a graphic display, the plate member

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32 may be divided into plurality.

[0050]

In addition, as for the part in contact with the container 300 of the press member 31 and the plate member 32, the coat of spring materials, such as rubber, may be given as a nonskid means.

[0051]

Among the press member 31 which pinches a container 300 by such grasping device 3, and the plate member 32, the overhang width of face from a container 300 is only the board thickness of the plate member 32 mostly, and the plate member 32 side has it. [ very little ] And it arranges the container 300 in in case the specimen transfer equipment 1 moves at a time one train of containers 300 grasped by the grasping device 3 to the 2nd rack 200 and changes them to it sequentially from the train by the side of the plate member 32 (refer to drawing 13 and drawing 14). Thereby, even if it is the case that the clearance 400 between the containers 300 of the next (it already moved and changed) train held at the 2nd rack is narrow, the grasping device 3 (plate member 32) does not contact and interfere in the container 300 of the next train. Therefore, even if the specimen transfer equipment 1 is the case that spacing (spacing of the train of a crevice 203 and a train) of the train of a container 300 and train which the 2nd rack 200 holds is comparatively small, it can perform a moving substitute of a container 300 smoothly.

[0052]

The supporter material 33 is installed movable to the frame 35 by showing around at the guide shaft which was prepared in the frame 35 and which is not illustrated. As shown in <u>drawing 3</u> thru/or <u>drawing 5</u>, the supporter material 33 moves so that it may approach and estrange to the plate member 32 fixed to the frame 35.

[0053]

As shown in <u>drawing 7</u>, the driving means 36 which makes a frame 35 open and close the grasping device 3 by moving the supporter material 33 is installed. The driving means 36 has the feed screw 361 to which the supporter material 33 is moved, and the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion made to rotate this feed screw 361 through a belt 362. If it moves so that the supporter material 33 and all the press members 31 may approach the plate member 32, if the output shaft of the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion rotates in the predetermined direction (refer to <u>drawing 8</u>), and the output shaft of the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion rotates to hard flow, it will move so that the supporter material 33 and all the press members 31 may estrange from the plate member 32. [0054]

In case a container 300 is held by the grasping device 3 (it pinches), as shown in <u>drawing 3</u>, the press member 31 and the plate member 32 estrange, and it considers as the condition that the upper bed section of a container 300 is located among the both. In the condition of not holding the container 300, the die length of a coil spring 34 is L1 of natural length. In addition, when the stop section which is not illustrated stops to the supporter material 33, a pin 30 escapes from a breakthrough 331 beyond the

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condition shown in <u>drawing 3</u>, and, thereby, the press member 31 secedes from the supporter material 33.

[0055]

If the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion is operated and the supporter material 33 is made to approach the plate member 32 from the condition shown in <u>drawing 3</u>, as shown in <u>drawing 4</u>, the press member 31 and the plate member 32 will contact the peripheral face of a container 300, and a container 300 will be inserted by the press member 31 and the plate member 32. [0056]

If the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion is operated further and the supporter material 33 is made to approach the plate member 32 from the condition which shows in <u>drawing 4</u>, as shown in <u>drawing 5</u>, the distance of the press member 31 and the supporter material 33 will be shortened, a coil spring 34 will be compressed, and the die length will be shrunken by L2. In the condition which shows in <u>drawing 5</u>, a container 300 is firmly pinched by the elastic force (thrust) of a coil spring 34 between the press member 31 and the plate member 32. The magnitude of the thrust (retention span) to which the press member 31 presses a container 300 at this time is K (L1-L2)x2, when the load rate of a coil spring 34 is set to K. In addition, the coil spring 34 may be compressed and installed by the initial state of <u>drawing 3</u> which is not holding the container 300, and thrust (retention span) when the container 300 has been held becomes the value with which the elastic force (thrust) in the initial state of a coil spring 34 was added to K (L1-L2)x2 in that case.

[0057]

Moreover, in the condition which shows in <u>drawing 5</u>, as for a pin 30, the wire extension by the side of the rear face of the supporter material 33 (the side and opposite hand in which the press member 31 was installed) becomes long.

[0058]

Such a grasping device 3 can grasp ten containers 300 simultaneously, as shown in <u>drawing 5</u>. That is, with this operation gestalt, since the grasping device 3 can grasp simultaneously the container 300 of the number of the container 300 which the 1st rack 100 can hold, the line count of the container 300 which the 2nd rack 200 can hold, and the same number, the specimen transfer equipment 1 can aim at improvement in the further moving substitute effectiveness, and can perform a moving substitute of a container 300 at a high speed more. Moreover, since it is replaceable by moving by moving the grasping device 3 only in the two-dimensional direction, a migration means 4 to mention later does not need to move the grasping device 3 in the array direction of the container to grasp, and, therefore, can attain simplification of the structure of the migration means 4.

[0059]

Moreover, even if the grasping device 3 is the case where the number of containers 300 is 1-9 (when only close 1-9 are in the 1st rack 100 as for a container 300), it can grasp them simultaneously similarly. Moreover, thrust (retention span) of the press member 31 to each container 300 can be made regularity

(it is the same as the time of the number of containers 300 being ten) irrespective of the number of the container 300 to grasp by forming the press member 31 and the coil spring 34 according to the individual to each container 300.

[0060]

The specimen transfer equipment 1 has a migration means 4 to move such a grasping device 3 in the two-dimensional direction containing the longitudinal direction of a container 300. The migration means 4 consists of a grasping device elevator style 41 which moves the grasping device 3 in the longitudinal direction (direction of a vertical), i.e., vertical direction, of a container 300, and a grasping device horizontal migration device 42 in which the grasping device 3 is moved horizontally (the vertical direction in drawing 1).

[0061]

As shown in drawing 7, the grasping device elevator style 41 has the movable bracket 412 in the vertical direction along with the stanchion 411 and the stanchion 411. The frame 35 of the grasping device 3 is being fixed to the bracket 412. Devices (not shown), such as a feed screw and a rack & pinion gear, and the motor (not shown) which drives this are formed in the stanchion 411, and a bracket 412 can be moved now in the vertical direction by actuation of these devices. Thereby, the grasping device elevator style 41 moves the grasping device 3 in the vertical direction.

[0062]

As shown in <u>drawing 1</u> and <u>drawing 7</u>, the grasping device horizontal migration device 42 is installed near the flank of both bodies 2 of equipment, respectively, it is installed so that it may be built between the rails 421 and 422 mutually located in parallel, a rail 421, and 422, and has the migration beam 423 which is a vertical position to rails 421 and 422. Rails 421 and 422 are installed in the height which carried out predetermined distance alienation from the top face of the body 2 of equipment, and it interferes in them with the 1st rack 100 conveyed according to the 1st rack conveyance device 11. The soffit section of the stanchion 411 of the grasping device elevator style 41 is being fixed to the center section of the migration beam 423.

[0063]

This grasping device horizontal migration device 42 has the motor (not shown) which drives devices (not shown), such as a feed screw and a rack & pinion gear, and this, and can move the migration beam 423 now along with rails 421 and 422 by these actuation. That is, the migration beam 423 moves to the longitudinal direction and perpendicular direction, and moves the grasping device elevator style 41 and the grasping device 3 to the longitudinal direction in <u>drawing 7 - drawing 14</u> in connection with the migration beam 423.

[0064]

As shown in <u>drawing 1</u>, the reflective sensor 6 which floodlights and receives light to a container 300 is installed near the 1st rack 100 which stopped in the halt location 21. This reflective sensor 6 functions by performing optical detection as a die-length detection means to detect the die length of the container

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300 which the grasping device 3 grasps, that floodlighting section 61 and light sensing portion 62 moving to the longitudinal direction of a container 300 relatively to a container 300. [0065]

With this operation gestalt, the reflective sensor 6 is formed to each of ten containers 300 held at the 1st rack 100. That is, ten reflective sensors 6 are installed. Since the configuration is mutually the same, about one of them, it represents and these reflective sensors 6 are explained.

[0066]

As shown in <u>drawing 7</u>, the reflective sensor 6 has the optical fiber 64 which connects the floodlighting section 61 and the light sensing portion 62 which are located above the upper bed of the 1st rack 100 which stopped in the halt location 21, the body 63 of a sensor which contained the light emitting device and the photo detector, and the floodlighting section 61 and a light sensing portion 62 and the body 63 of a sensor. The floodlighting section 61 and a light sensing portion 62 consist of configurations of a graphic display in one. The reflective sensor 6 transmits the light which the light emitting device within the body 63 of a sensor emitted to the floodlighting section 61 through an optical fiber 64, floodlights it from the floodlighting section 61, and is irradiated at the peripheral face of a container 300. And the reflective sensor 6 receives the reflected light reflected by the peripheral face of a container 300 by the light sensing portion 62, and the light is led to the photo detector within the body 63 of a sensor with an optical fiber 64, and it carries out photo electric translation.

[0067]

Such a reflective sensor 6 detects the die length (die length below the location (grasping location) which the grasping device 3 grasped (pinching)) of a container 300 by performing optical detection, the floodlighting section 61 and a light sensing portion 62 moving to the longitudinal direction of a container 300 relatively to a container 300, in case the container 300 grasped by the grasping device 3 is lifted from the 1st rack 100 by actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41.

[0068]

By such configuration, with this operation gestalt, the die length of a container 300 can be detected with easy structure, and simplification of structure, miniaturization, and reduction of a manufacturing cost can be aimed at.

[0069]

Moreover, with this operation gestalt, since the reflective sensor 6 is formed in each of ten containers 300 which the 1st rack 100 can hold according to the individual, when the part which does not hold the container 300 is located in the inside of ten crevices 101 of the 1st rack 100, even if the container 300 held at the 1st rack 100 is the case of only one, the die length of the container 300 can be detected further.

[0070]

Moreover, with this operation gestalt, although the floodlighting section 61 and the light sensing portion 62 of the reflective sensor 6 are installed fixed to the body 2 of equipment, they may be installed in the

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longitudinal direction of the container 300 which the grasping device 3 grasped movable. [0071]

A die-length detection means to detect the die length of a container 300 seems moreover, to detect [ touch / what detects the die length of a container 300 by picturizing a container 300 with an image sensor (photography), and processing the image (analysis), and / not only a configuration like this operation gestalt but / a container 300 ] the die length of a container 300 mechanically. [0072]

As shown in <u>drawing 1</u>, the regulation means 5 is installed near the 2nd rack 200 which stopped in the halt location 23. the container 300 with which the regulation means 5 was held at the train of the next door of a train which performs the moving substitute in the 2nd rack 200 -- that is It has the function which regulates the position of the container 300 which already (previously) moved to the 2nd rack 200, and was changed, and has the specification-part material 51 which may contact the container 300 made into the object which regulates a position (contact), and the specification-part material migration device 52 to which this specification-part material 51 is moved.

[0073]

As shown in <u>drawing 11</u>, the specification-part material 51 has the tabular contact section 511 which is a position almost vertical to the level surface, and the covering section 512 prolonged almost horizontally from the upper bed section of the contact section 511 while meeting in the direction of a train of the container 300 which the 2nd rack 200 which stopped in the halt location 23 holds. The specification-part material 51 has the almost same width of face as the die length of the longitudinal direction of the 2nd rack 200, and regulates simultaneously the position of the container (10) 300 of one train in the 2nd rack 200.

[0074]

Devices (not shown), such as a feed screw and a rack & pinion gear, and the motor (not shown) which drives this are built in the specification-part material migration device 52, and the specification-part material 51 can be moved now to the vertical direction (the direction of a vertical), and a horizontal direction (longitudinal direction in <u>drawing 7</u> - <u>drawing 14</u>) by actuation of these devices.

As shown in <u>drawing 13</u> and <u>drawing 14</u>, the regulation means 5 When moving the container 300 which the grasping device 3 grasped to the 2nd rack 200 and changing it, The inner surface of the contact section 511 is made to contact the flank (a flange 302 or peripheral face of the drum section of a container 300) of the container 300 held at the train of the next door of a train in the 2nd rack 200 which moved and changes. The specification-part material migration device 52 is operated so that the container 300 of these next trains may be drawn near rightward in drawing. Thereby, the position (sense of dip) is regulated so that the container 300 held at the train of the next door of the 2nd rack 200 may be estranged from the container (the grasping device 3 grasps) 300 under moving substitute (it keeps away like).

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# [0076]

Although the position of the container 300 of the train of the right end in drawing is regulated in the condition which shows in <u>drawing 13</u> in order to change by moving the regulation means 5 from the right-hand side in drawing of the 2nd rack 200 to eye two trains In case similarly it changes by moving from the right-hand side in drawing of the 2nd rack 200 to eye three trains, eye four trains, and eye five trains, the position of the container 300 held from the right-hand side in drawing at eye two trains, eye three trains, and eye four trains is regulated, respectively.

# [0077]

By having established such a regulation means 5, in the case of a moving substitute of a container 300, it can prevent more certainly that the container 300 held at the train of the next door of a train which performs the moving substitute in the 2nd rack 200, and the container 300 which the grasping device 3 and the grasping device 3 grasped contact and interfere, and a moving substitute of a container can be ensured [ smoothly and ].

# [0078]

Moreover, when the specification-part material 51 has the covering section 512 with this operation gestalt, it is a wrap about upper bed opening of the container 300 in which this covering section 512 regulated the position. Even if it is the case where should have flown and it bounds by causes, such as an impact which the specimen contained by the container 300 under moving substitute is moving by this, the droplet can prevent mixing in other containers 300 held at the 2nd rack 200, and can prevent contamination certainly.

# [0079]

As shown in <u>drawing 15</u>, the specimen transfer equipment 1 is equipped with the control means 15 to which each part of the specimen transfer equipment 1 which was mentioned above was connected, respectively. This control means 15 has CPU (Central Processing Unit) and a sequencer, and is constituted software-wise and in hard. In addition, the storage section (storage means) 71, the display 72, and the control unit (input section) 73 are further connected to the control means 15, respectively. [0080]

The storage section 71 has the storage [ a control means 15 ] (record medium) which memorizes a program, data, etc. (record) and which can be read. This storage consists of magnetic and optical record media, such as RAM (Random Access Memory: include both volatility and a non-volatile), FD (Floppy Disk ("Floppy" is a trademark)), HD (Hard Disk), and CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory), or semiconductor memory. It equips with this storage free [ the thing prepared in the storage section 71 fixed, or attachment and detachment ], and the input data from each part connected to the data and the control means 15 which were processed by it by each program while the various programs and the various data for performing control action of the various application programs corresponding to each part of the specimen transfer equipment 1 and the specimen transfer equipment 1 which is mentioned later, such as a program, were beforehand memorized by this storage is memorized.

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## [0081]

A control means 15 reads the various programs and data which were memorized by the storage section 71 if needed, and controls actuation of each part of the specimen transfer equipment 1 based on the program and data.

[0082]

In addition, the control means 15 may be constituted in hard so that all may be constituted in software, without having a sequencer or all may be performed by sequence control only using a sequencer.

[0083]

The 1st rack conveyance device 11 and the 2nd rack conveyance device 12 are connected to the control means 15, respectively, and a control means 15 controls actuation of the 1st rack conveyance device 11 and the 2nd rack conveyance device 12, respectively.

[0084]

The bar code reader 13 for containers and the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack are connected to the control means 15, respectively. The bar code reader 13 for containers and the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack output the information read in the bar code label 301 and the bar code label 201 to a control means 15, respectively.

[0085]

A control means 15 memorizes the information inputted from the bar code reader 13 for these containers, and the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack in the storage section 71. Such information is used for creation of the administrative data (administrative information) mentioned later etc. [0086]

It connects with the control means 15, and the reflective sensor 6 is floodlighted from the floodlighting section 61 to the peripheral face of a container 300 with the directions from a control means 15, receives the reflected light by the light sensing portion 62, and outputs the signal which carried out photo electric translation and which was acquired by the photo detector within the body 63 of a sensor to a control means 15.

[0087]

The motor 363 for grasping device closing motion of the grasping device 3 is connected to the control means 15 through the driver (actuation circuit) 75, and a control means 15 controls actuation of the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion through a driver 75.

[8800]

The grasping device elevator style 41 is connected to the control means 15, and a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41. The motor which drives the grasping device elevator style 41 consists of pulse motors (stepping motor), and a control means 15 controls the grasping device elevator style 41 by open loop control. That is, the control means 15 grasps the location (height) of the vertical direction of the grasping device 3 by supervising the number of driving pulses to the motor which drives the grasping device elevator style 41. In addition, the detector which detects the

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location of the vertical direction of not only a configuration such but the grasping device 3 is formed, and you may make it a control means 15 control the grasping device elevator style 41 by closed loop control.

## [0089]

The grasping device horizontal migration device 42 is connected to the control means 15, and a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device horizontal migration device 42. The motor which drives the grasping device horizontal migration device 42 consists of pulse motors (stepping motor), and a control means 15 controls the grasping device horizontal migration device 42 by open loop control. That is, the control means 15 grasps the horizontal location of the grasping device 3 by supervising the number of driving pulses to the motor which drives the grasping device horizontal migration device 42. In addition, the detector which detects the horizontal location of not only a configuration such but the grasping device 3 is formed, and you may make it a control means 15 control the grasping device horizontal migration device 42 by closed loop control.

## [0090]

It connects with the control means 15, and a control means 15 controls actuation of the specification-part material migration device 52, and the specification-part material migration device 52 moves the specification-part material 51.

## [0091]

The display 72 consists of CRT (Cathode-Ray Tube), a liquid crystal display, etc., for example, displays an actuation screen, a data input screen, etc.

# [0092]

The control unit 73 consists of a mouse, a keypad, a keyboard, etc., and is operated in the cases, such as a data input.

# [0093]

Moreover, the control means 15 is connected to the managerial system 500 which manages the whole specimen processing system containing various kinds of equipments other than the specimen transfer equipment 1, such as distributive-pouring equipment (not shown) and an analysis apparatus (not shown).

# [0094]

A control means 15 outputs the administrative data (administrative information) mentioned later to a managerial system 500 (transmission), and a managerial system 500 memorizes the administrative data in remaining as it is or the storage section (storage means) which does not illustrate by carrying out edit etc. suitably (record).

# [0095]

Moreover, the light emitting device 81 and photo sensor 82 which are mentioned later are connected to the control means 15, respectively. A light emitting device 81 emits light with the directions from a control means 15, and is floodlighted towards a photo sensor 82, and a photo sensor 82 outputs the

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signal which carried out photo electric translation of the light which received light, and obtained it to a control means 15.

[0096]

The above specimen transfer equipments 1 have the retention span fixed-ized means (thrust fixed-ized means) which keeps constant the retention span (thrust to the container 300 of the press member 31) of a container 300 irrespective of the outer diameter of the container 300 which the grasping device 3 grasps. The retention span fixed-ized means (thrust fixed-ized means) has a deformation detection means 8 to detect that the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34 turns into the specified quantity.

[0097]

The light emitting device 81 (floodlighting section) by which the deformation detection means 8 was installed in the rear-face side near the end section of the longitudinal direction of the supporter material 33 (the side and opposite hand in which the press member 31 was installed) as shown in <u>drawing 3</u> and which consisted of LED etc., for example, It consists of a photo sensor 82 (light sensing portion) installed in the rear-face side near the other end of the longitudinal direction of the supporter material 33, and the displacement section 83 displaced to a light emitting device 81 and a photo sensor 82 according to the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34.

[0098]

A light emitting device 81 emits a beam of light R towards a photo sensor 82, and a photo sensor 82 carries out photo electric translation of the beam of light R which received light. A beam of light R is floodlighted along the array direction of the container 300 which the grasping device 3 grasps. [0099]

The displacement section 83 is constituted from the point of a pin 30 by the configuration of a graphic display. The displacement section 83 is in the location which does not interrupt the beam of light R emitted from the light emitting device 81, and when the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34 reaches the specified quantity (L1-L2), it comes to a location which interrupts a beam of light R by the condition (before deformation of a coil spring 34) that the grasping device 3 is not grasping the container 300 (refer to drawing 5). The displacement section 83 is formed corresponding to each of ten press members 31, and the displacement section 83 corresponding to each press member 31 can intercept a beam of light R now, respectively.

[0100]

By such configuration, in case the grasping device 3 grasps a container 300, when the supporter material 33 approaches the plate member 32 further from the condition which shows in <u>drawing 4</u> While a coil spring 34 was compressed, when the pin 30 projected at the rear face of the supporter material 33 and the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34 reaches the specified quantity (L1-L2) The displacement section 83 interrupts the beam of light R emitted from the light emitting device 81, and a photo sensor 82 stops receiving a beam of light R (condition shown in <u>drawing 5</u>). Therefore, the

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deformation detection means 8 can detect that the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34 turns into the specified quantity (L1-L2), when a photo sensor 82 will be in the condition of not receiving light from the condition of receiving a beam of light R.

[0101]

In case a control means 15 holds a container 300 by the grasping device 3, it operates the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion, supervising the detecting signal from a photo sensor 82, and is controlled by the place which detected that the photo sensor 82 stopped receiving a beam of light R to stop the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion. When the grasping device 3 has held the container 300 by performing such control (condition shown in drawing 5), the deformation (the amount of contractions) of a coil spring 34 turns into the specified quantity (L1-L2) irrespective of the outer diameter of a container 300. Therefore, the thrust (retention span) of the press member 31 to a container 300 is set to K (L1-L2)x2 irrespective of the outer diameter of a container 300. Thus, in the specimen transfer equipment 1, the thrust (retention span) of the press member 31 can be kept constant irrespective of the outer diameter of a container 300. Thereby, even when it is the container 300 with a thin outer diameter, a retention span can grasp firmly, without becoming weak too much, and can prevent a totter and omission of a container 300 more certainly. A retention span does not damage a container 300 and seems moreover, not to become strong too much, and not to damage, even when it is the container 300 with a thick outer diameter.

[0102]

As mentioned above, a retention span fixed-ized means (thrust fixed-ized means) is constituted from the deformation detection means 8 and a control means 15 by this operation gestalt.

[0103]

Such a retention span fixed-ized means (thrust fixed-ized means) Since it will operate if the displacement section 83 corresponding to any one of ten press members 31 interrupts a beam of light R Even if it is the case where the number of the containers 300 to grasp is 1-9 (when only close 1-9 are in the 1st rack 100 as for a container 300), the thrust (retention span) of the press member 31 can be kept being the same as that of the above to regularity (K (L1-L2)x2) irrespective of the outer diameter of a container 300.

[0104]

Moreover, with this operation gestalt, since the above-mentioned effectiveness can be attained by forming 1 set of light emitting devices 81, and a photo sensor 82 rather than forming a light emitting device 81 and a photo sensor 82 in each to ten press members 31, simplification of structure and reduction of a manufacturing cost can be aimed at.

[0105]

Next, based on <u>drawing 7</u> - <u>drawing 14</u>, order is explained for the control action of the specimen transfer equipment 1 later on.

[0106]

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In addition, since control action, such as reading of the information over the bar code labels 301 and 201, was already described, the explanation is omitted.

[0107]

[1] A control means 15 controls actuation of the 1st rack conveyance device 11, the 2nd rack conveyance device 12, and the rack stopper device that is not illustrated, respectively, makes the halt location 21 suspend the 1st rack 100 holding a container 300, and makes the halt location 23 suspend the 2nd empty rack 200.

[0108]

[2] As shown in <u>drawing 7</u>, a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device horizontal migration device 42, and moves the grasping device 3 above the 1st rack 100 which stopped in the halt location 21. Moreover, the grasping device 3 is made into the condition (open condition) that the press member 31 estranged from the plate member 32. The container 300 held at the 1st rack [1st] 100 shown in <u>drawing 7</u> is the thing of a class with the comparatively long die length.

[3] A control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41, drop the grasping device 3 to a position, and make it the part near the upper bed of a container 300 located between the press member 31 and the plate member 32, as shown in <u>drawing 8</u>. Subsequently, a control means 15 operates the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion, and makes the grasping device 3 grasp a container 300.

[0110]

[4] As shown in drawing 9, a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41, raises the grasping device 3 to a position, lifts a container 300, and it carries out extraction out of the crevice 101 of the 1st rack 100. While floodlighting the reflective sensor 6 to the peripheral face of a container 300 at this time, that reflected light is received. If a container 300 is lifted, it goes and the soffit section of a container 300 passes through the location of the floodlighting section 61 of the reflective sensor 6, and a light sensing portion 62, since the reflected light is no longer detected, by the reflective sensor 6, the reflective sensor 6 can detect the location of the soffit section of a container 300. The control means 15 is supervising the detecting signal from such a reflective sensor 6, from the height information on the grasping device 3 in case the reflected light is no longer detected by the reflective sensor 6, acquires the information about the die length (die length below the location (grasping location) which the grasping device 3 grasped (pinching)) of a container 300, and memorizes the die-length information on the container 300 in the storage section 71.

[0111]

[5] the container 300 which the control means 15 controlled actuation of the grasping device horizontal migration device 42, and has been held by the grasping device 3 -- the inside of the crevice 203 of five trains of the 2nd rack 200 -- carry out horizontal migration of the grasping device 3 so that it may be most located above the crevice 203 of the train by the side of the plate member 32 (right-hand side in

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drawing). Subsequently, a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41, drops the grasping device 3, and makes the container 300 bottom currently held by the grasping device 3 insert into the crevice 203 of the 2nd rack 200, as shown in <u>drawing 10</u>. At this time, based on the dielength information on the container 300 detected above [4], a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41 so that the soffit of a container 300 stops just before the bottom 202 of the 2nd rack 200. Subsequently, a control means 15 operates the motor 363 for grasping device closing motion, makes the press member 31 estrange from the plate member 32, and cancels grasping to the container 300 of the grasping device 3.

[0112]

By performing such control, irrespective of the die length of a container 300, the specimen transfer equipment 1 can be moved to the 2nd rack 200 calmly (carefully), and can change a container 300. A container 300 falls and the soffit of a container 300 seems namely, for the soffit section of a container 300 not to collide with the bottom 202 of the crevice 203 of the 2nd rack 200, or not to collide with a bottom 202 by the grasping device 3 descending too much, after the downward distance of the grasping device 3 is insufficient for reverse and canceling grasping to a container 300. Therefore, it can prevent certainly that the specimen in a container 300 serves as a drop, fly and bound by the impact to which the soffit of a container 300 collided with the bottom 202, and mix in other containers 300, and produce contamination or a container 300 is damaged.

[0113]

[6] As shown in <u>drawing 11</u>, after a control means 15 operates the grasping device elevator style 41 and raises the grasping device 3 to a predetermined location, it operates the grasping device horizontal migration device 42, and moves the grasping device 3 above the 1st rack 100.

[0114]

Moreover, a control means 15 operates the 1st rack conveyance device 100, and it conveys the 2nd rack [ 1st ] 100 to the halt location 21 in the meantime while it conveys and discharges to the downstream the 1st rack [ 1st ] 100 which became empty. The container 300 held at the 2nd rack [ 1st ] 100 shown in drawing 11 is the thing of a class with the comparatively short die length. [0115]

Moreover, after a control means 15 controls actuation of the specification-part material migration device 52 and raises the specification-part material 51, it is horizontally advanced toward the direction of the 2nd rack 200, and is located above the container 300 to which the part by the side of the contact section 511 was moved above [5], and was changed. Since the bore of the crevice 203 of the 2nd rack 200 is a little larger than the outer diameter of a container 300 and a clearance (play) is between the inner skin of a crevice 203, and the peripheral face of a container 300, the container 300 which moved to the 2nd rack 200 and was changed is the position which inclined a little in one of sense to the direction of a vertical above [5].

[0116]

[7] As shown in <u>drawing 12</u>, like the above [3], a control means 15 drops the grasping device 3 to a position, and makes the grasping device 3 grasp the container 300 which the 2nd rack [1st] 100 holds. Moreover, a control means 15 controls actuation of the specification-part material migration device 52, and it drops the specification-part material 51 so that the upper bed section of the container 300 which moved to the 2nd rack 200 above [5], and was changed may be located inside the contact section 511. [0117]

[8] As shown in drawing 13, based on the detection result of the reflective sensor 6, it acquires the dielength information on a container 300, and memorizes the dielength information in the storage section 71 while a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41, raises the grasping device 3 like the above [4] and lifts a container 300 from the 1st rack 100. Moreover, a control means 15 controls actuation of the specification-part material migration device 52, and moves the specification-part material 51 horizontally toward the specification-part material migration device 52 side. The contact section 511 contacts by this the flange 302 of the container 300 which moved to the 2nd rack 200 above [5], and was changed, the upper bed section of these containers 300 can draw near to the specification-part material migration device 52 side, and it is regulated by position which inclines so that it may keep away from the side in which the position of these containers 300 is vacant as for the 2nd rack 200 (refer to drawing 6).

[0118]

[9] A control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device horizontal migration device 42, and the container 300 held by the grasping device 3 carries out horizontal migration of the grasping device 3 so that it may be located in the upper part of the train of the next door of a train of the crevices 203 of five trains of the 2nd rack 200 where the container 300 moved and was already changed. Subsequently, a control means 15 controls actuation of the grasping device elevator style 41, drops the grasping device 3, and makes the container 300 bottom currently held by the grasping device 3 insert into the crevice 203 of the 2nd rack 200, as shown in drawing 14.

[0119]

Even if it is the case that the clearance 400 between the containers 300 of the next train which already moved and were changed by one side of the part which pinches the container 300 in the grasping device 3 consisting of plate members 32 at this time is narrow, the plate member 32 can insert in that clearance 400 easily. Therefore, as for the specimen transfer equipment 1, the array pitch of the crevice 203 which a container 300 inserts can perform a moving substitute of a container 300 smoothly also to the 2nd comparatively small rack 200.

[0120]

Moreover, since the position of the container 300 of the next train which already moved and was changed is regulated by the regulation means 5 at this time as explained above [8] It can prevent certainly that these containers 300, and the descending container 300 and the grasping device 3 (plate member 32) contact and interfere, and a container 300 can be moved smoothly and carefully, and can

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be changed, and breakage of a container 300 etc. can be prevented certainly. [0121]

Moreover, upper bed opening of the container 300 which already moved and was changed is covered with the covering section 512 of the specification-part material 51 at this time. Even if it is the case where the specimen in the container 300 in the middle of moving and changing should have flown by this, and it bounds, there is no possibility of mixing in the container 300 which the droplet already moved and changed, and contamination can be prevented certainly.

[0122]

Moreover, since a control means 15 performs the same control as the above [5] at this time and the soffit of a container 300 is stopped just before the bottom 202 of the 2nd rack 200, grasping to the container 300 of the grasping device 3 is made to cancel. Since die length is shorter than the container 300 which moved above [4] the container 300 which is moving this time and is changed, and was changed, the grasping device 3 cancels grasping to a container 300 compared with the time ( drawing 10) of the above [4], after descending to a lower part more. Thus, since the specimen transfer equipment 1 controls actuation of the grasping device 3 and the grasping device elevator style 41 based on the detection result of the die-length detection means of the above containers 300 even if it is the case where the abouchement of the container 300 from which die length differs every rack [ the ] 100 according to the 1st rack conveyance device 11 is carried out, the soffit of a container 300 collides with the bottom 202 of the 2nd rack 200 at the time of a moving substitute -- preventing -- being quiet (polite) -- it is replaceable by moving.

[0123]

[10] The specimen transfer equipment 1 moves and changes a container 300 to the crevice 203 of eye eye three trains and 4 train and eye five trains one by one from the drawing Nakamigi side of the 2nd rack 200 similarly henceforth.

[0124]

When the moving substitute by the 2nd rack 200 concerned is completed, and a control means (information creation means) 15 The information which the bar code reader 13 for containers memorized by the storage section 71 read in the bar code label 301 of each container 300, The information which the bar code reader 14 for the 2nd rack read in the bar code label 201 of the 2nd rack 200 is read. Based on such information, the management data (management information) which specifies each container 300 held at the 2nd rack 200 (receipt), respectively is created, and the management data is outputted to a managerial system 500 (transmission). Moreover, the created management data may be memorized in the storage section 71.

[0125]

The information which the information which specifies the 2nd rack 200, such as a rack ID number, and the container 300 held in each location where the container 300 of the 2nd rack 200 is held, and this each location are made to correspond, and specifies this each container 300 is included in said

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administrative data.

[0126]

Here, the example is explained about the information (informational creation) which the container 300 held in each location where the container 300 of said 2nd rack 200 is held, and this each location is made to correspond, and specifies this each container 300.

[0127]

Beforehand, for example, the location is shown to 50 crevices 203 of the 2nd rack 200, respectively (it corresponds to a location), the number (crevice number) of "1" - "50" is attached, and the container ID number of the container 300 inserted in each crevice 203 and the crevice number of each crevice 203 are matched, respectively. For example, when the container 300 of a container ID number "a" is inserted in the crevice 203 of a crevice location number "1", the data in which that is shown are created and this is performed about all the crevices 203 of crevice number "1" - "50."

[0128]

In this case, when the crevice 203 (empty crevice 203) where the container 300 is not inserted into the 2nd rack 200 exists (for example, when a container 300 is not inserted in the crevice 203 of a crevice number "2"), the data in which that is shown are created (when the crevice 203 of a crevice number "2" is empty).

[0129]

In addition, the information by the side of the container 300 matched with the crevice number of the crevice 203 where said container 300 was inserted is not restricted to the container ID number of said container 300. Moreover, in addition to the container ID number of said container 300, 1 of the information (information about the specimen (it corresponds) contained by the container 300) which the bar code label 301 given to the container 300 supports further, or 2 or more may be included in the information by the side of said container 300.

[0130]

Moreover, the information which shows the number of the container 300 held at the 2nd rack 200, the information which specifies the specimen transfer equipment 1 which performed the moving substitute of the container 300 concerned may be included in said administrative data.

[0131]

When the moving substitute by the 2nd rack 200 of said container 300 is completed, moreover, a control means 15 While operating the 2nd rack conveyance device 12, conveying the 2nd rack 200 concerned to the downstream and discharging to the 2nd rack blowdown section 24 The 2nd rack 200 of the following opening is conveyed in the halt location 23, and a container 300 is similarly moved and changed from the 1st rack 100 to this 2nd rack 200, and like the above, administrative data are created and it outputs to a managerial system 500 (transmission). And the specimen transfer equipment 1 repeats such actuation.

[0132]

In managing each container 300 held at the 2nd rack 200, with the bar code label 201 (for example, rack ID number) currently stuck on the 2nd rack 200 by using said administrative data each container 300 held every 2nd rack 200 at the 2nd rack 200 -- bundling up -- being manageable -- thereby -- many containers 300 -- ease -- it is efficiently [ certainty and ] manageable.

As mentioned above, although the operation gestalt of a graphic display of the specimen transfer equipment of this invention was explained, this invention is not limited to this and each part which constitutes a specimen transfer equipment can be permuted by the thing of the configuration of the arbitration which can demonstrate the same function. Moreover, the structure of arbitration may be added.

[0134]

[0133]

For example, the migration means to which a grasping device is moved may be movable in the direction of a three dimension in a grasping device. Moreover, it may be constituted so that the migration means to which a grasping device is moved may move a grasping device only to the longitudinal direction of a container, and by moving the 1st rack and the 2nd rack in the array direction of the container of the 1st rack, and the direction which intersects perpendicularly to a grasping device, it may be constituted so that a moving substitute of a container may be performed.

[0135]

Moreover, with [ the number of the container which the 1st rack holds ] two [ not only ten but or more ], in this invention, how many are sufficient as it.

[0136]

Moreover, the 2nd rack shall hold a container not only for what holds a container in ten line x5 train but for n and m in a n line xm train as an integer of two or more arbitration, respectively. In that case, although n does not need to be in agreement with the number of the container which the 1st rack holds, it is desirable that it is in agreement. n can change by moving to a high speed more efficiently by being in agreement with the number of the container which the 1st rack holds.

[0137]

Moreover, although the numbers of the container which a grasping device can grasp may not be the number of the container which the 1st rack can hold, the line count of the container which the 2nd rack 200 can hold, and the same number and are better than they at least, it is desirable that it is the same number. Since it is replaceable by moving by moving a grasping device only in the two-dimensional direction by this while being able to perform a moving substitute of a container at a high speed more, the migration means of a grasping device does not need to move a grasping device in the array direction of the container to grasp, and, therefore, can attain simplification of the structure of a migration means. [0138]

Moreover, the floodlighting section and the light sensing portion which floodlight and receive light are prepared in a container movable, and this floodlighting section and light sensing portion move to the

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stopped container, and a die-length detection means to detect the die length of a container may be constituted so that the die length of a container may be detected.

[0139]

Moreover, irrespective of the outer diameter of a container, the retention span fixed-ized means (thrust fixed-ized means) could be constituted by not only the thing using electric control but the mechanical device so that the retention span of a grasping device might be fixed-ized.

[0140]

Moreover, the specification-part material of a regulation means may be a member which has the part of the shape of a rod which may contact the peripheral face of the container held not only at a tabular thing but at the 2nd rack. Moreover, upper bed opening of the regulated container may not be covered.

[0141]

Moreover, this invention is applicable not only to the specimen transfer equipment to which the container held at the 1st rack is moved to the 2nd rack, and is changed but the specimen transfer equipment which moves the container held at the 2nd rack to the 1st rack, and changes it to reverse. Moreover, the specimen transfer equipment of this invention may be what can perform both the moving substitute by the 2nd rack from the 1st rack, and the moving substitute by the 1st rack from the 2nd rack (thing which has the two operating states switched).

[0142]

[Effect of the Invention]

As stated above, according to this invention, the container which contained the specimen can be efficiently moved from a rack to a rack smoothly, and can be changed.

[0143]

moreover, in having an information creation means to create administrative information By the 2nd information support (for example, information about the ID number of the 2nd rack) given to the 2nd rack by being held at the 2nd rack, and using administrative information in managing each container with which the specimen was contained every 2nd rack -- each container -- bundling up -- being manageable -- thereby -- many containers -- ease -- it is efficiently [ certainty and ] manageable.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] Drawing 1 is the top view showing the operation gestalt of the specimen transfer equipment of this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is the perspective view showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 3] It is the cross-section top view (condition before holding a container) showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 4] It is the cross-section top view (condition in the middle of holding a container) showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 5] It is the cross-section top view (condition grasping a container) showing the grasping device

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in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 6] It is the perspective view showing the guide member and the 2nd rack in the specimen transfer equipment shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

[Drawing 7] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

[Drawing 8] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

[Drawing 9] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 10] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 11] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 12] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1

# [Translation done.]

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#### **DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS**

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] Drawing 1 is the top view showing the operation gestalt of the specimen transfer equipment of this invention.

[Drawing 2] It is the perspective view showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 3] It is the cross-section top view (condition before holding a container) showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 4] It is the cross-section top view (condition in the middle of holding a container) showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 5] It is the cross-section top view (condition grasping a container) showing the grasping device in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 6] It is the perspective view showing the guide member and the 2nd rack in the specimen transfer equipment shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 7] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 8] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 9] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

[Drawing 10] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 11] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 12] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 13] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in drawing 1.

[Drawing 14] It is the cross-section side elevation showing the configuration and operating state of a specimen transfer equipment which are shown in <u>drawing 1</u>.

[Drawing 15] It is the rough block diagram of the specimen transfer equipment shown in  $\underline{\text{drawing 1}}$ . [Description of Notations]

- 1 Specimen Transfer Equipment
- 11 1st Rack Conveyance Device
- 12 2nd Rack Conveyance Device
- 13 Bar Code Reader for Containers
- 14 Bar Code Reader for 2nd Rack
- 15 Control Means
- 2 Body of Equipment
- 21 Halt Location
- 22 2nd Rack Feed Zone
- 23 Halt Location
- 24 2nd Rack Blowdown Section
- 3 Grasping Device
- 30 Pin
- 31 Press Member
- 311 Crevice

- 32 Plate Member
- 321 Roll Off
- 33 Supporter Material
- 331 Breakthrough
- 34 Coil Spring
- 35 Frame
- 36 Driving Means
- 361 Feed Screw
- 362 Belt
- 363 Motor for Grasping Device Closing Motion
- 4 Migration Means
- 41 Grasping Device Elevator Style
- 411 Stanchion
- 412 Bracket
- 42 Grasping Device Horizontal Migration Device
- 421 422 Rail
- 423 Migration Beam
- 5 Regulation Means
- 51 Specification-Part Material
- **511 Contact Section**
- 512 Covering Section
- 52 Specification-Part Material Migration Device
- 6 Reflective Sensor
- 61 Floodlighting Section
- 62 Light Sensing Portion
- 63 Body of Sensor
- 64 Optical Fiber
- 71 Storage Section
- 72 Display
- 73 Control Unit
- 75 Driver
- 8 Deformation Detection Means
- 81 Light Emitting Device
- 82 Photo Sensor
- 83 Displacement Section
- 100 1st Rack
- 101 Crevice

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200 2nd Rack

201 Bar Code Label

202 Bottom

203 Crevice

300 Container

301 Bar Code Label

302 Flange

400 Clearance

500 Managerial System

R Beam of light

# [Translation done.]

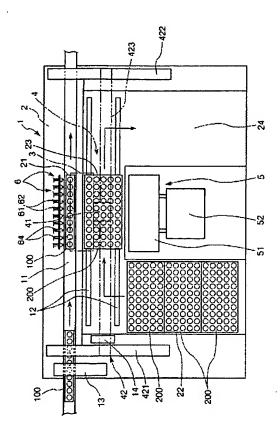
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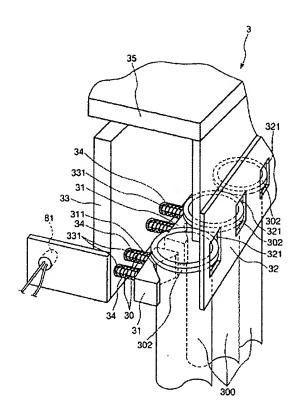
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### **DRAWINGS**

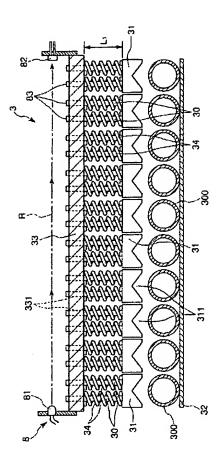
# [Drawing 1]



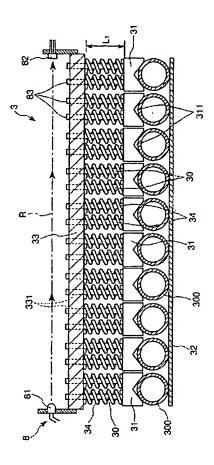
# [Drawing 2]



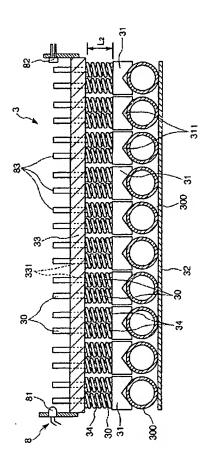
[Drawing 3]



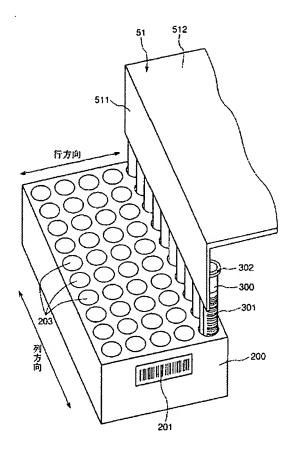
[Drawing 4]



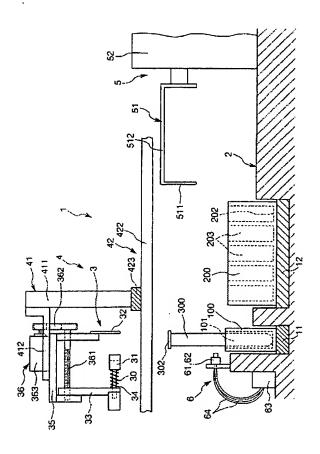
[Drawing 5]



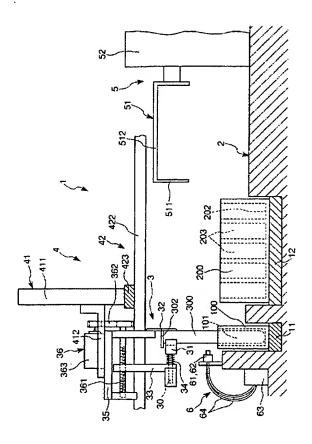
# [Drawing 6]



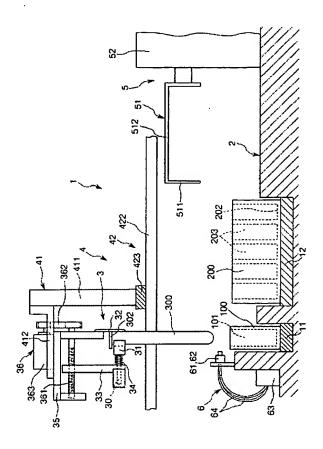
[Drawing 7]



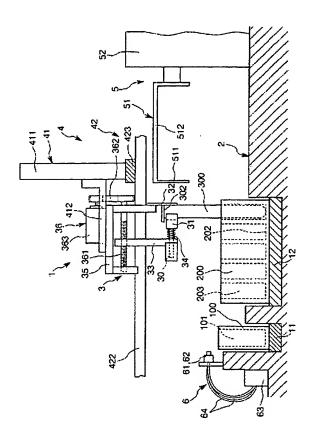
[Drawing 8]



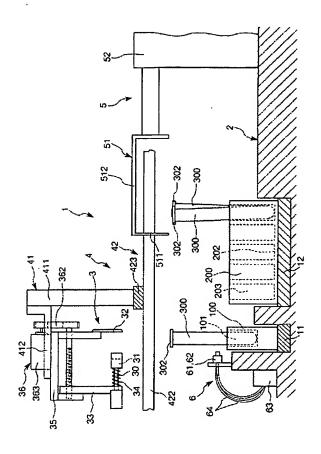
[Drawing 9]



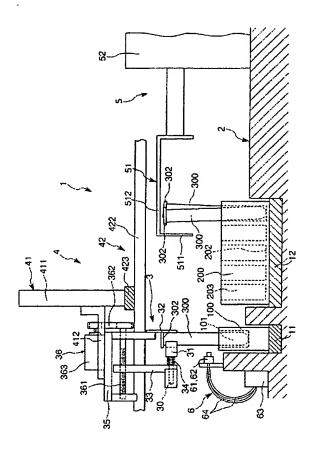
[Drawing 10]



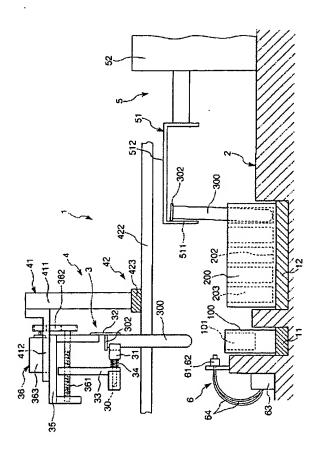
[Drawing 11]



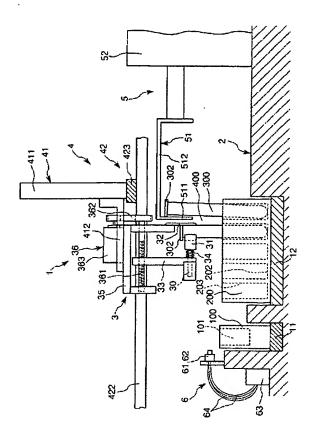
[Drawing 12]



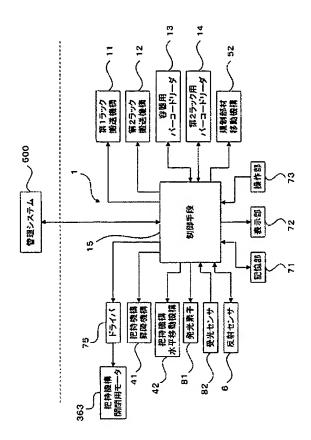
[Drawing 13]



[Drawing 14]



[Drawing 15]



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# Bibliography

- (19) [Publication country] Japan Patent Office (JP)
- (12) [Kind of official gazette] Open patent official report (A)
- (11) [Publication No.] JP,2004-61136,A (P2004-61136A)
- (43) [Date of Publication] February 26, Heisei 16 (2004. 2.26)
- (54) [Title of the Invention] Specimen transfer equipment
- (51) [The 7th edition of International Patent Classification]

G01N 35/04 G01N 35/02

## [FI]

G01N 35/04 H G01N 35/02 C

[Request for Examination] Un-asking.

[The number of claims] 16

[Mode of Application] OL

[Number of Pages] 26

- (21) [Application number] Application for patent 2002-215898 (P2002-215898)
- (22) [Filing date] July 24, Heisei 14 (2002. 7.24)
- (71) [Applicant]

[Identification Number] 390029791

[Name] Aloka, Inc.

[Address] 6-22-1, Mure, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo

(74) [Attorney]

[Identification Number] 100091627

[Patent Attorney]

[Name] Morning ratio One husband